

Social Order

THE PROBLEM OF
INTEREST

Robert McEwen

January, 1960
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Agricultural Changes: A National Problem

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The Family and Its Economic Environment

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The Church and Social Welfare

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Economics of Migrant Labor

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Wanted: A Sense of History

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. . . just a few things:

THE PLIGHT OF MIGRANT LABOR

AMERICAN AGRICULTURE is a sick industry with no agreed, politically-feasible remedy at hand, Professors Orazem and Schnittker point out in an article in this issue:

While national income has been increasing, that of agriculture has been falling. Many farm operators are getting low returns for the time and effort they put into farming.

One of the conspicuous sufferers has been the farm laborer whose real income showed no significant increase from 1947 to 1957, a decade when the purchasing power of the factory worker rose by one-fourth. Most critical of all is the plight of the migratory farm worker, numbering nearly a half-million people, who follow the crop harvests each year as the seasons travel north. This group, whose dependents are estimated at 300,000, earned an average of \$859 in 1957 for 131 days of farm and nonfarm work.

Aptly described by Secretary of Labor, James P. Mitchell, as "The Excluded American," the migrant is without the protection of most laws covering workers—minimum wage laws, unemployment insurance and workmen's compensation. Moreover, the residential requirements of most state public assistance laws handicap migrant families; nor have they commonly any claim on the health and educational facilities of the communities through which they pass. "The migrant worker," says *The Farm Labor Fact Book*, recently published by the Department of Labor, "occupies the lowest level of any major group in the American economy."

How, under our present system, this situation is inevitable was cogently demonstrated by Professor Varden Fuller at the strikingly successful National Conference to Stabilize Migrant Labor, sponsored by the Catholic Council on Working Life, at Chicago, November 21-22. Professor Fuller's analysis and practical recommendations appear on another page.

Professor Fuller declares flatly:

Migratory laborers do not exist because the farm economy needs them; they exist because our society has a backlog of unsolved social and economic problems.

He notes further that: "... temporary farm work is as much a conjuncture of unsolved social and economic problems as it is an employment category." It will not help our analysis to glamourize the migrant agricultural worker: in many instances he is shiftless, made so (if you will) by the absence of economic and especially educational opportunities earlier. Moreover, his possibilities for steadier work at better pay are clouded by the availability of Mexican nationals, glad to take temporary employment here at meager wages.

That the domestic migrant must compete in a labor market that includes an equal number of Mexicans, brought into the country under an international treaty, ostensibly to supplement the labor supply at peak seasons, was related in our November, 1957 issue by Patrick H. McNamara, S.J., in "Migrants In Our Midst." The article concluded that

there is a gaping need for additional on-the-spot studies around the country on the farm employment question. For only on the basis of accurate information can there be any effective, long-range planning which will draw growers, workers, labor contractors, processors, and the consumers themselves into a cooperative effort calculated to achieve the economic betterment of all.

These *braceros* are imported under Public Law 78 in a form of government-supervised indenture. The Act specified that measures were to be taken to insure that domestic farm workers will not be adversely affected by the employment of Mexican nationals. The administration of the Act is the responsibility of the Secretary of Labor. Republican Secretary James P. Mitchell was publicly praised at the Chicago Conference by Democratic Senator Paul Douglas as "the first Secretary of Labor who has really tackled this problem."

Consultants' Report

To advise him on problems connected with PL 78, Secretary Mitchell appointed a panel of four Consultants, including Monsignor George G. Higgins, Director of the Social Action Department of NCWC. Last fall the Consultants issued a Report conditionally recommending a temporary extension of the program. Noting the need for more searching study of all phases of the farm labor problem (the Labor Department is, in fact, engaged in such research), the Consultants demanded that the Act be amended to guarantee that the availability of a foreign labor pool will not disadvantage domestic farm labor. Among their "minimal requirements" the Consultants want the use of *braceros* limited to temporary and unskilled jobs, primary responsibility placed on the employer for the

recruitment of domestic labor (whose conditions of employment must at least match those offered Mexican nationals); they further urged that the Secretary of Labor be empowered to fix minimum wages for *braceros* and to promulgate such regulations as he deems necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act.

A Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, under the chairmanship of Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr., is currently holding hearings throughout the country. The information the committee receives, along with discussions at meetings such as the Chicago Conference, should provide material for an omnibus bill to cope with this national problem of immense proportions. Federal action is needed, if for no other reason than that interstate commerce is involved, interstate commerce in human beings. What such a bill might well include was listed at the Chicago Conference by William L. Batt, Jr., Secretary of Labor and Industry of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, under these headings:

1. Federal licensing of crew leaders and farm labor contractors.
2. Amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to provide minimum wages for farm workers.
3. Amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to bar the use of young children for hire in agriculture.
4. Extend the Farm Housing Loan Program to include migrant labor camps.
5. Establish an interstate system of highway rest stops for migrants.
6. Provide federal funds for a federal state relief grant program for migrants.
7. Supplement existing federal grants to state health and welfare programs in

order to expand these programs to include migrants.

8. Amend the Taft-Hartley Act to provide collective bargaining rights for farm workers.

9. Authorize full-scale investigation of the program for the importation of alien seasonal farm workers and its effect on domestic labor supplies.

10. Establishment of a federal Bureau of Migratory Labor.

It is characteristic of the trend toward gigantism in American agriculture that the migrant is employed especially on the very large farms and in the enormous orchards and vineyards that are properly called "factories-in-the-fields." About five percent of all our farms pay out 70 per cent of salaries to agricultural workers. Like the family farmer himself, the migrant is the victim of the vast productivity of our agriculture. Mechanization and a shorter growing season, the result of improved methods, has made him superfluous except at the peak of the harvest. Only seven man-hours are needed to grow an acre of rice in the United States as against the 700 man-hours expended in tilling the same space in Japan. Output per worker in agriculture has increased by 83 per cent since 1940, that in industry, despite automation, only 30 per cent. A rich grower, who can afford the expense, can have his cotton picked by machine at \$10 a bale as against a cost of \$40 for hand-picking.

As a result, work is available to the migrant farm laborer at present only half the days of the year. Moreover, the average migrant is, almost by definition a socially-disadvantaged person (being usually of a minority group), rootless, without skills, experience or incentives that would make the next

step up the economic ladder possible for him.

Even so, the plight of the American migratory farm labor is winning increased public attention. He will be helped because this nation never permanently refuses to face moral issues. Most probably, the practical measures that will be adopted will follow the general suggestions of Professor Fuller because these have the support of reason and of enlightened public opinion. The ultimate goal is to reduce the migratoriness of the migrant, to stabilize his employment more and more.

Action promised

Finally, the migrant will be helped because he has the formal promise of Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell, a man resolute in accepting all obligations of office. Mr. Mitchell told the Chicago Conference:

The migrant problem will not be ignored, nor can people be led to ignore it. Our community will find ways to solve it, and by community I mean the community of citizens that make up America, citizens with wisdom and compassion and good sense, citizens who save their final censure for those who stand by and seem unable to find within their economy a place for conscience.

That same American community, then, had better be prepared to pay higher prices for its food. The cost of living index would be much higher today had food prices risen proportionally with other items. The public, in good conscience cannot expect the farmer to pay higher prices for machines and fertilizer and mortgage money and to meet competition by sweating his hired help—or his own family.

EDWARD DUFF, S.J.

IN THE ECONOMICS of free markets and free men the concepts of supply and demand are essentially libertarian. Those who have goods or services to sell elect where and when to offer them. Similarly, those who buy goods and services are equally free to accept or decline. Supply and demand, accordingly, constitute a system of offers and acceptances. Only in controlled and totalitarian economies do the concepts of supply and demand become specifications of required performance.

The American economy is not, of course, completely one of free markets; it is not always one of free men. But when departure is made from the system of free offers and acceptances, it is expected to be done in accordance with decisions that are deliberately and constitutionally made. In war emergency, we find it necessary to specify manpower utilization, to specify maximum prices and maximum amounts that buyers may take. In the civilian economy, we sanction minimum protections, such as fair labor standards, for those not in good position to exercise effective self-protection. We also sanction, within limits, the rights of groups to organize for self-protection, as well as the measures they may take toward achieving self-determination. We do not leave it to individuals to decide the extent to which they will support highways, schools, or the defense establishment. All of these steps to restrict the functioning of free offer and acceptance are taken for the sake of common interest and pursuant to decisions that are constitutionally made.

The relevance of these rather basic premises to the subject of migratory labor is that in the segment of our national economy concerned with supply

Migrant laborers represent a

Economics

and demand for accomplishing the seasonal tasks of agriculture the libertarian philosophy of offer and acceptance has been mutilated, and this under sanctions that I believe would have great difficulty in surviving the test of public interest, and perhaps also of law and constitutionality

With this forewarning of my conclusion, my efforts will be directed to explaining my argument, not in terms of the attributes that are commonplace in the literature of migratory labor—poverty, ill-health, bad housing, etc.—but in the more pleasant euphemisms of the economist, *i.e.*, supply, demand, and price.

In the markets of free men, demand does not determine supply; nor does supply determine demand. Rather, the forces of supply and demand interact on each other through time. The commonly held conception about migratory labor is different. We have been told time and again that the reason for migratory labor is that the nature of agriculture is such as to require it. One of the most faithful proponents of this view of things has been the United States Department of Labor. Its most recent version of this fundamentalism is contained in the *Farm Labor Fact*

large backlog of unsolved social and economic problems.

of Migrant Labor

VARDEN FULLER

Book, under the heading of "Demand and Supply," in the following terms:

The employment of migrant farm labor develops out of the logic of labor market conditions. Hired farm workers are in critical demand for short periods of the year. In many areas this demand cannot be met from local sources living within commuting distance from the place of work. It therefore becomes necessary to recruit workers from more distant areas where there is at the time a sufficient supply of workers willing to leave their homes for short-term farm work. These workers are known as migrants.¹

If one is vulnerable to fundamentalisms, as all of us are in varying degrees, this proposition seems utterly reasonable and indeed to be a "logic of labor market conditions." However, if one is antipathetic to fundamentalisms, he may note that four pages later the *Fact Book* contains a quite different and basically conflicting view of why workers enter into migratory employment. Here, under the heading "Reasons for Migration," the text commences as follows:

It is easy to see that the absorption of small farms, technological changes, and acreage retirement restrictions have caused various groups to migrate. For example, southern sharecroppers who are dispossessed and no longer needed be-

cause of their replacement with machinery may be forced to seek a living as local farm workers. Families from marginal subsistence and small farms, lacking the necessary capital or the schooling, training, and skills for other kinds of work, find themselves driven out into the wandering world of seasonal farm labor. Some members of minority groups, discriminated against in other fields of employment, find uncertain place in the harvesting of foods.²

Are dispossession, lack of skills, and force the equivalents of willingness? Are they really attributes to "the logic of labor market conditions"? What is logical about discrimination? For me, the statements about "workers willing to leave their homes" in the first quotation and about the dispossessed and unskilled finding themselves "driven out into the wandering world of seasonal farm labor" are openly contradictory. The first-quoted sentence would have made more sense if it had said: The employment of migrant farm labor develops out of the *illogic* of labor market conditions.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

Executive Secretary of President Truman's Commission on Migratory Labor, Dr. Fuller is a Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of California, Berkeley.

¹ U. S. Department of Labor, *Farm Labor Fact Book*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1959, p. 111.

With no wish to belabor the Department of Labor or to upbraid its editors, one may nevertheless point out the confusions that reign, even in the highest realms, about the cause and effect relations in seasonal and casual farm employment.

Migratory laborers do not exist because the farm economy needs them; they exist because our society has a large backlog of unsolved social and economic problems.

Given the continued availability of a labor force with narrowly restricted opportunities, a system of casual labor utilization was built around it. This system of labor use did not initially evolve as a deliberate choice of present day labor users. In important respects, the users are as much the victims of the system as are the workers. When the users state that domestic workers are unreliable, they are stating a truth. It is a truth that is inherent in the system. It is a consequence of the fact that temporary work in agriculture is taken mainly by persons who chronically or intermittently can get nothing better to do; when something better appears, they leave. Hence, when nonagricultural employment is high, farm workers are scarce; when other employment is slack, farm workers are in surplus.

In a way that unfortunately can be obscure, temporary farm work is as much a conjuncture of unsolved social and economic problems as it is an employment category. The cause and effect relationships that appear in this conjuncture are confusing. When the workers are found to be poor or destitute, farm wages and employment conditions are often blamed. Actually, the cause and effect relationship, at least at the time of initial entry into farm

work, may be more the other way. The people have not *become* poor from working in agriculture; they have become agricultural workers because they were already poor. Thus, in the sense of providing an opportunity for those not accepted elsewhere, temporary farm work may be regarded as ameliorating poverty rather than causing it. Moreover, it is to be noted in this connection that many individuals and groups have made their way through temporary farm employment and into more acceptable situations, in agriculture and elsewhere. Hence, migratory labor has fortunately not been entirely a dead end.

Two alternatives

In respect to populations of migratory workers, social agency people have two broad alternatives in assessing their obligations: they may view populations of temporary farm workers as an employment segment that from time to time needs relief; or they may view these populations as being persons and families who have therapeutic and rehabilitative needs in order to enhance their productivity and self-dependence. In actual life, both objectives are served to some extent. But if the emphasis is mainly on relief, the effect is to aid the perpetuation of the system. If one were to imagine the situation in which the problems of depression, of discrimination in employment, of old age, of vocational rehabilitation, of mental and physical health, and of education were all solved, he would be imagining the situation in which there would be virtually no domestic workers available for seasonal farm work. In the postwar years of full employment, the system has been under stress for this very reason. Had it not been for the relief supplied by the *bracero* program, considerable

modification would likely have been made.

More remains to be said about the peculiarities and obscurities that surround the concept of demand for migratory workers, and about the interactions between supply and demand. Before going further, it is necessary to introduce another mechanism that is essential to free markets—price. In respect to the services of migratory workers, the concept of this useful mechanism is also encrusted with fundamentalisms. I will identify two of them and discuss each in turn.

1. *The supply of migrant workers is independent of the price; therefore, it is no use to raise wages.*

Within the context of the situation that has come to exist, the first portion of this doctrine is substantially true. But it is the chain of facts and accepted presumptions that makes it true, rather than the truth itself, that is significant. The first link in the chain is the fact that has already been considered—workers enter the migratory force and remain in it out of despair rather than from choice. Hence, the supply of workers at any moment of time is established by external forces that determine how big a residual is left over from employment in other sectors of the economy. The price for picking beans or tomatoes—whether high or low—is not likely to tempt workers away from automobile plants. If higher rates were offered by individual users or by districts of users, the effect of course would be to attract workers away from the individuals or districts that did not meet the higher rates. This does not increase the total supply of migrants. Consequently, it is called *pirating*, and the growers have an ethic against it.

Moreover, they have an organizational structure that helps them to preserve the integrity of the ethic.

Beginning with this link of fact, and sidestepping some of the issues that are assumed away, the next link in the chain is easily joined. If it is true that raising wages will not increase the labor supply, then why raise wages? This is a trap that is surprisingly easy to fall into. It is a trap that contains the rest of the links of the chain. If a wage increase will not yield a larger supply of labor, then no useful purpose is served by a wage increase. This matures the fundamentalism to the point where it provides absolution for growers from competing with each other and also from competing with other employing segments of the economy. In the process of accepting this fundamentalism, there is also the implicit acceptance of the organizational structures and practices by means of which growers may establish and maintain a collusive price for labor. In other markets, such price-fixing mechanisms and practices could be judged as in restraint of trade and could be dealt with by antitrust actions.

External source of labor

But having swallowed the fundamentalism whole, we added the next link to the chain. If the supply of workers cannot be increased by higher wages, and if the supply is inadequate at prevailing wages, the only thing to do is to look for an external source of labor that is willing to work at the prevailing wage. If such a source is available and access to it is sanctioned, as it was with Public Law 78, the links of the chain are all joined, and the validity of the proposition is in-

evitable. All deficits in supply at the prevailing price may be filled with imported contract laborers who are paid no more than the established prevailing rates. This is a supply situation that economists call infinitely elastic. In economic theory it is a condition that is supposed to occur only in respect to individual purchasers who are so microcosmic that their actions have no perceptible effect on the total market. That it has been achieved by an aggregation of growers whose hirings constitute a substantial segment of the economy reflects both their political genius and the vulnerability of others to a loosely-joined chain of fundamentalisms.

Can growers pay?

A second proposition about price that threatens to mature into a fundamentalism can be stated as follows:

Growers cannot afford to pay a competitive wage for seasonal and casual labor.

Under constraints and assumptions that want explicit recognition and scrutiny, but which usually go by without being noticed, this proposition has a certain validity. Growers state that they cannot add wage increases to the price of their products; this is true because in product markets, competition is effective. Growers also state that if they paid substantially higher wages for seasonal and casual labor, they would be squeezed and possibly forced out of business; it is true that they would be squeezed, at least temporarily, and some growers might retire from production. It is quite probable that the low wages which prevail correspond rather closely to the low economic value of the work performed. This last statement may be rather shocking, for most people are

inclined to think of the harvest as the ultimate fruition of all activities and thus to be critically important. But this view is more poetic than economic, as I shall endeavor to explain.

The economic value of a unit of labor service is not determined by the indispensability of the task. It is determined mainly by the price at which workers are available to work at the task. Let us try to use strawberries as an example. If strawberries sell at \$1 per cup and the labor to pick them can be hired for five cents per cup, raising strawberries is likely to be a very profitable business. At this structure of prices, pickers could command much higher wages, if they had the power to do so. But if pickers continue to be available at five cents per cup, the strawberry acreage will expand; market prices will fall; profits will narrow. After adjustments are carried through, the market price will be at a point where no further expansion is profitable when pickers are being paid five cents per cup. At this stage, strawberry growers would declare, quite correctly, that they would be squeezed if they had to increase their pickers to seven cents. But if somehow they were forced to pay seven cents, the reverse process would set in and marginal production would be withdrawn until the reduced supplies yielded a sufficient price to make the employment of labor at seven cents profitable.

There are other ways in which the productivity level of labor adjusts to the prevailing wage level. Here are some examples: when the wage for picking cotton is low enough to make it profitable, growers will hand pick rather than machine pick their cotton; when labor costs are low enough and

the labor is available, sugar beet growers will hand cultivate their beets instead of using machines.

Growers may make short-run gains from the employment of cheap labor. But it is not likely they will be able to retain any such gains over a period of time. Although absolved from the necessity of competing for a labor supply, they must compete for land on which to employ the labor and they face vigorous competition in the product markets. Landowners may gain, unless they acquired their properties at fully capitalized prices. To the extent that the growers are also landowners, they may realize gains from capital appreciation and from high net rents. But the ultimate gains from cheap labor, to the extent there are any, probably are realized mainly by consumers.

It is quite possible that there are few long-run net gains to anyone from the employment of cheap labor. We can test this possibility by examining the consequences of an assumption. Suppose it were to be taken as specified that the costs of labor for all hand and stoop tasks had to double within a ten-year period, and this by increments of ten per cent each year. There are many adjustments that could be made; I will try to list some of the most prospective ones.

1. Rents and values of land used for the production of hand or stoop labor commodities might fall.

2. Marginal producers or segments of marginal production might start to shift to crops not requiring hand labor.

3. Growers would likely discontinue those tasks and operations which can be omitted entirely or on which machines can be used.

4. Interest in mechanization and other labor-saving technologies would be greatly accelerated.

5. Growers would become much more alert to various possibilities of increasing the productivity of their labor, by using supplemental mechanical devices, by on-the-job training, by organizing and planning the work.

6. The employment of seasonal and casual labor would of course decline; those remaining would be employed at a higher level of productivity in accordance with the wage adjustments that have been assumed.

In my opinion, the possibilities for reducing hand labor and for increasing productivity are very great. There are developments in this direction all the time but the nature of the labor supply has been such as to exert very little pressure. Under pressure, I believe we should see some rather remarkable changes. If the hypothetical ten-year program previously mentioned were to be carried out, I would expect its most notable effect would be a sharp decline in the amount of labor used and a counterpart rise in productivity.



Thus, the fundamentalism that growers cannot pay competitive wages is plausible when one regards the proposition as applying to the price structures and the utilization pattern that currently exist. Given the opportunity for adjustments to occur, the proposition does not hold. It is true, of course, that growers will not prepare themselves to pay high wages as long as they expect to get by with paying low wages. Only when high wages must be paid will the economic value of labor rise.

This is not a matter of individual choice; it is a force inherent in the economic system.

An element of labor price which is not less important than the wage rate remains to be considered. That is the tenure of the hiring. It reflects the extent to which the employment relation, even though temporary, is either stable or casual. There are seasonal industries in which the core of the work force is held together from one season to another by elements of the employment relationship that give it structure and content. The people are employed as individuals; they are put into classified positions and entered upon the payrolls; they have seniority which implies preferential employment rights and the possibilities of advancement; they have union membership and their conditions of employment are determined in part by collective bargaining; they have unemployment insurance; they have the possibility of qualifying for pensions and other fringe benefits. These are some of the elements which give a measure of stability and meaning to the employer-employee relationship.

In seasonal agriculture

In contrast, the typical employment relation in seasonal agriculture is utterly barren. The man who picks or chops cotton or does similar work in fruits or vegetables typically enjoys none of the features that stabilize employment relations or give the worker any sense of identification with the employer, with the industry, or with the work force. Very frequently, seasonal farm workers do not know the names of the farmers on whose places they have worked; not always do they know the real name of the labor contractor who brought them there. The worker fre-

quently does not know whether the farmer or the labor contractor is his actual employer. Since the great majority of the work is done at piece rates, neither the contractor nor the farmer hires *people as individuals*. With the work being done at piece rates, neither farmer nor contractor is much concerned whether a hundred boxes of tomatoes are picked by two workers or by ten, so long as they get picked. In a similar way, there is little concern whether those who pick today are the same as those who picked yesterday or last week or last year, so long as there are enough hands to get today's job done on time.

The biological cycles of activity that are inherent in crop production are inevitably demanding. But these demands do not prescribe the particular form of labor utilization by means of which the work is done. The characteristics of the economic and social environment in which the system of labor utilization evolves has a great deal to do with the particular form it takes. The environmental conditions are changing. Change is occurring, too, in the system of labor use. But strangely enough, the major changes of recent years have involved the employment of the *braceros* and not the employment of domestics. In effect, then, the recent modifications are more an effort to avoid the changing environment than to accommodate to it. The building of good on-farm housing—but in the form of dormitories and mess halls that can be utilized only by single men—is a clear example of this.

The direction of change needs to be modified and the rate of change needs to be accelerated. Moreover, ways of change can be adopted and followed

that will be to the ultimate advantage of labor users, as well as to the workers, and in the public interest as well. The changes that are appropriate need not be abrupt. If goals of public policy are established and adhered to, the changes can be gradual and transitional.

In my opinion, the goals of public policy should include:

1. The establishment and maintenance of an employment environment that offers positive inducements to a resident core labor force that will have attachment to and identification with seasonal agriculture, one that will constitute an employment category in which workers will have a reasonably good chance of making a living.

2. An organized and planned program for a systematic supplementation to this core force from workers not normally in the labor force but available for summer employment.

These propositions imply the assumption of responsibilities by employers, workers, and by the instrumentalities of government at all levels.

The first essential step is toward decasualization and stabilization of employment and the development of content in employer-worker relations.

These are difficult objectives for the individual farm; their difficulty is greatly diminished if the labor needs of farmers in a district are pooled and approached as an aggregate. The pooling of the labor needs of individual farms makes it possible to employ workers more fully and effectively. This means more days of work per worker and consequently more efficient utilization of the labor force. To give the employment relation stability and content, some form of contract should be

used. On the Atlantic Coast, associations employing Puerto Rican workers have offered employment contracts that include a minimum employment guarantee. The association structure, the contract, and the employment guarantee are the foundation of the *bracero* program.

This type of arrangement should appeal to workers who live in the many villages that are spotted through the farming areas. These families try to maintain fixed domiciles and to obtain work within the community periphery of their homes.

Labor users are doubtful, I realize, that the association contracting procedure will succeed with citizens who are not subject to constraints, as are the *braceros*. Yet, it has worked with Puerto Ricans, who are citizens and not subject to constraints except as these are specified by contract. As a step toward decasualization and toward introducing stability and content in the employment relation, this appeals to me as one of the most practical moves that could be made.

Potential supply

The second of my propositions recognizes the likelihood that although a reliable core work force be successfully established, it may not be large enough to handle all of the temporary work. For a supplemental source, I would turn to the high school and college youth of the towns and cities. Here is a large potential supply of workers, quite capable of performing seasonal tasks and critically in need of constructive engagement during the summer months. The current reputation and conditions of farm work are not favorable to the utilization of this potential force on a

significant scale. Many of those who tried to work on farms are bitter about their experiences.

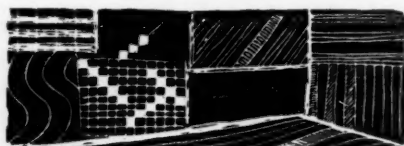
A system for their utilization would have to be carefully planned and arranged in advance. Field sanitation, housing, and transport would have to be on higher standards than we now know them, though not radically different from the specifications of the *bracero* contract. Certainly, labor contractors could not be used. High school teachers or other adult leaders would have to be associated with each group of 15 to 20 youths. The contractual arrangements for employment should be channeled through the same associations as described above.

Remedies

These propositions are sketched only in the barest detail. For the moment they are not meant to be specific but rather to indicate directions that might be taken if public policy is to be constructive. No such possibilities have any chance to succeed unless there is the conviction among labor users that success is essential. A primary and indispensable requisite to the frame of mind that will make constructive policy feasible is that the *bracero* program be committed to a specified termination date and that no similar programs again be authorized. Otherwise, as long as there is the possibility of obtaining *braceros* to make good on failures of even the most minimum of efforts toward systematic utilization of citizen labor, the climate will be unfavorable for experimentation with these or any other approaches to decasualization.

The immediate disposition of labor users, and perhaps of the Farm Place-

ment people as well, may be to reject such proposals as being impractical. They may be impractical but, until they are tried conscientiously and with a sincere desire to see them succeed, we will never know if they are practical or not.



If such approaches to the solution of seasonal labor problems could be used, they imply a higher quality and more reliable labor force. Reliable employment should attract reliable workers. In a stable situation, employers could go much further toward training workers, planning work, and mechanizing—all of which would serve to raise the productivity of workers. With an identified labor force, farmers would be less vulnerable to the criticisms that now emerge when slack employment in other sectors of the economy dumps an excess of workers upon them.

In respect to the utilization of urban youth, I can see the possibility of such a program becoming so powerful a force for developing self-dependence and reducing delinquency that townspeople and their many organizations would pitch in to see that it worked. Another aspect is worth mentioning: the evident desire of farmers and farm organizations that they and their problems be understood and appreciated by city people. Is there a more effective way to do this than manifesting an interest and willingness to employ the youth of those whose favorable view they seek, and this under conditions that evoke commendation rather than criticism?

Agricultural Changes: A National Problem

FRANK ORAZEM and JOHN A. SCHNITTKER

AERICAN AGRICULTURE is being held up as a showpiece and as an example in performance and efficiency. Its performance is unique; it is not being matched by any other agriculture in the world. Yet the assertion is commonly made that something has gone wrong with American agriculture. It has, to be sure, been in trouble before, but this time it seems to be alone with its woes. The public has difficulty in singling out the problem. Legislators and farm experts do not agree. The magic drug has not been found, even though many remedies have been proposed and several of them have been tried, so far to little or no avail.

The present farm situation did not come about overnight. Some of the problems were already in evidence in the 1920s but, because of the depression and the war, they did not come to the fore until recently. Now, it is quite clear that agriculture is out of balance with the other sectors in the economy. While national income has been increasing, that of agriculture has been falling. Many farm operators are getting low returns for the time and efforts they put into farming.

Our American society feels obligated to do something about the plight of

agriculture. Indeed, the national interest demands that the agricultural economy be kept healthy to satisfy the needs of our society. This was the premise which prompted a conference sponsored by the Center for Agricultural Adjustment at Iowa State University, October 27-31, 1958. At that conference a group of experts discussed the nature, cause, and possible solutions of the major problems of commercial agriculture. Their ideas have been summarized in *Problems and Policies of American Agriculture*.¹

The book does not prescribe any set of policy recommendations for agriculture. Such is not its purpose. It does, however, give a picture of agricultural problems (with their causes) and points out some of the alternative courses of action (and their consequences) which, if taken, might ease the problems but will not entirely solve them. No one expects a "cure-all" drug to be found.

The farm problem facing the Second Session of the 86th Congress is in broad outline indistinguishable from that which the 85th Congress as well as the

¹ Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1959. vii, 460 pp.

The authors are professors in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan.

First Session of the present Congress failed to face. The Agricultural Act of 1958, recording the demise of the already ineffective corn acreage allotment program, cleared the way for the large corn crop of 1959. As a result, hog prices have since joined in the price decline, poultry and egg producers have been through a bad price year, and the aggregate level of farm prices reached a long-time low. The consumer price index continues to be fairly stable largely because of lower farm and food prices. If a crisis must be born of surplus farm commodity accumulation with its associated public costs, it is surely a little nearer at hand in 1960, since the stock-pile is larger and the costs associated with its acquisition and maintenance are not noticeably lower. Such a crisis, however, is not imminent. There are simply too many more important problems involved.

In the past few years there has been some increase in information and perhaps some trend toward agreement about what makes the farm problem. Both sides in the current political controversy over what to do about agriculture have discovered the technological revolution. Paradoxically, one side concludes that it makes political intervention in the farm sector less tenable than a generation ago, while the other concludes that the new technological pace makes government action more necessary than ever before.

Congress has continued to subject itself to an immense amount of detailed information on the farm problem, ranging from the composition of the wheat surplus, the relationship between corn and sorghum grains, and the price of turkeys, to the competition among regions implicit in all the commodity data. The volume of information already

assembled is too large to assimilate. Yet, it must be brought up to date for each new Congress. Each time it looks more discouraging to farmers and taxpayers alike.

Although the two political parties continue to disagree sharply over farm policies and programs, both continue to claim as their overriding objective a stable and prosperous agriculture, organized around the family farm, and dedicated to its preservation—if not at all costs, at least at substantial sacrifice if necessary. Both parties claim to want higher farm prices. They disagree, however, on how to get them: one party wants to do it by government-sponsored production restraints, and the other mainly through increased freedom of production and marketing.

Farming is a unique industry. It is made up of millions of individual farms and farm managers who act as individuals. Control is not centralized as is the case in many non-agricultural industries. In these industries, only a few top officials take part in the decision making process; the efforts of their decisions on the industry as a whole, moreover, are, to some extent at least, predictable. Decisions in agriculture are determined by millions of individuals, each acting in his own interest. The total farm output is the result of decisions made by many individual farmers who, by themselves, have little or no effect on total output or prices received for their products. These are some of the factors that contribute to the kind of problems found more in agriculture than in other industries.

In spite of all the shortcomings, American agriculture is and will continue to be a strong asset to the rest of the economy. In its performance it

surpasses other industries and, in fact, with its released labor is continuously helping to maintain and to increase production in other industries. But the transition process is painful for many individual farm operators and the structure of thousands of farms is at stake.

Situation chronic

A bit of agreement may be emerging among agricultural economists that farm abundance is not merely a persistent but is a chronic situation; they tend to agree, moreover, that the situation would be similar even were prices much lower than at present. But not all economists nor all public officials are convinced. The notion of a remunerative and stable free market farm price and income level, born of experience in an era when increases in demand were not annually outpaced by gains in productivity, dies hard. It is dying just the same. As a result, Congress fears to face the consequences of returning farm price making to the free market.

There is little doubt that such a course of action would depress farm prices by roughly one-fourth from present levels—and that for a long time, perhaps for three to five years or more. Prices would rise again only as farm producers found themselves unable to produce abundantly for lack of capital. A decline in current resource use and in the rate of innovation would then reduce farm output, raise farm prices, and probably reset the stage for a repeat performance. As the most vulnerable farmers found themselves unable to continue in business, the already high rate of migration from farm areas would be substantially increased. Such are the unpalatable prospects facing Congressmen inclined to vote for a free market in agriculture.

Whether we approach the farm problem after 1960 with free markets or with substantial government protection and aid, large declines in the farm population and labor force seem almost certain. Perhaps the most important papers at the Iowa Conference were devoted to the problems of those who will leave agriculture. It was encouraging to find experts there who believe that the transfer from farm to urban job and residence is not necessarily more difficult than are such transfers for nonfarm people. If the nonfarm economy is growing relatively rapidly, it will continue to attract farm people as it has done especially in the last 15 years. But it is almost inconceivable that in the next few years the nonfarm economy can attract such a large part of the farm work force that actual or potential farm surpluses will disappear.

Decrease in farm units

In the last two decades a great number of farm units have disappeared from the farm scene. There are others still fighting for their survival. In addition to efficiency, volume of business is an important determinant of income obtained from farming. In most cases economic efficiency and volume of sales are closely related to farm size. Competition of different sizes of farms sifts out the strongest—those that are able to survive the economic, psychological, and social pressures. An efficient farm unit meets all the problems which confront it: government regulations, unstable practices, domestic and foreign markets, changing weather and what not.

Commercial farming is becoming a big business. Farm families' dependence on the market system has been continually increasing. There is a strong urge

and need for higher incomes on their part. A growing and prosperous economy with all the modern conveniences and recreational facilities also breeds complexities in contemporary rural living. Goods that would be considered a few decades ago extravagant luxuries are today becoming necessities. Differences between rural and urban living are becoming less and less. Today's farmer lives or would like to live like his city cousin; he even buys his milk and eggs in the grocery store.

American agriculture is experiencing a revolution comparable in some degree to the industrial revolution of the 19th century. The ways of farming have changed considerably during the past half century and so did farm family living. At present, the transition from current agricultural organization to the one that would better meet the needs and aspirations of our growing and changing economy is being accelerated. Changes that are taking place affect not only agriculture itself but also rural communities, businesses and other institutions which are a component part of life on the land.

This situation poses a challenging problem for everyone interested in the welfare of people engaged in farming. The task of the Iowa Agricultural Adjustment Center is primarily one of educating rural and urban people on the choices which must be made if the farm problem of the 1960s is to be less troublesome than that of the 1950s. We do not lack information on which to base such choices today. If anything, there is too much information. To reduce it to bare essentials and to disseminate it widely is a task worthy of the Iowa undertaking.

With the public educated on the

essentials of the agricultural problem, Congressional efforts to fashion a new farm program will be less frustrating. But they will not be easy. Some day, Congress will have to stop the accumulating of publicly-held stocks and must eventually reduce them. This will lower aggregate farm income—whether it is done through extremely low market prices or through a direct limit on the quantities of farm commodities which may be sold. Only if farm prices are raised enough to offset the drop in marketing, or if direct treasury payments were begun, could a large income decrease be avoided.

To raise farm prices when the farm product surplus is at a record level is an impressive contradiction even in an economy like ours, where the market has been substantially modified by government action. Consumers, who would bear the cost of higher farm prices and taxpayers, who bear the cost of maintaining the surplus, are scarcely to be blamed if they suggest to their Congressman that farm price increases wait until the excess stocks are gone.

Even if the public problems related to commercial agriculture could be lessened in some way, Congress would still be faced with the low income half of agriculture, the farm producers without a consistent lobby in Washington. The Rural Development Program, after a hopeful start, has turned out to be very little indeed. It is the stepchild of half a dozen agencies in Washington but is not supported wholeheartedly by any. It is asking too much of an election-year Congress to take a real look at the poor in agriculture when the less-poor on the land have such difficult problems. A new administration will have an unexampled opportunity in that virgin area in 1961.

The Family and Its Economic Environment

LEO C. BROWN, S.J.

AT NO TIME in the history of the world have the conditions under which men earned their living changed as rapidly as in the United States during the past century. One hundred years ago 64 per cent of all persons gainfully employed worked in agricultural pursuits. Today less than 10 per cent of our nation are farmers. Within less than a century what was an agricultural people has become an urbanized industrial nation. This change in the way we make our living has brought about sweeping changes in our manner of life.

To provide a background for discussion, some of the more obvious of these changes must be briefly sketched.

1. *We enjoy more leisure and a higher standard of living than our forebears.* A century and a half ago, when our present midwestern metropolitan centers were frontier settlements, men worked from the first light of morning to the last light of evening to provide their families with the barest necessities. The task of providing food, which in this country was plentiful but plain and lacking variety, simple home-produced

clothing and primitive shelter required the full energy of all but the smallest hands in the worker's family. Leisure was largely unknown. During the next half century substantial progress was made. On that fateful night of 1871 when Mrs. O'Leary's cow backed into a lantern at 558 DeKoven Street the resulting conflagration cost the city \$194 million. The magnitude of this disaster affords some crude measure of economic progress. By this time the workday had approached ten hours and the family could provide its food from half its income. Some money, perhaps ten per cent of the worker's income, was becoming available for optional expenditures beyond the barest necessities of life. But it is worth remembering that when Pope Leo XIII wrote his encyclical in 1891, men worked ten hours a day and 60 hours a week and earned 20 cents per hour. Today the wage earner's annual income purchases perhaps

The National Director of the Institute of Social Order prepared these observations for the symposium on "The Christian Family and the Pattern of American Society" of the Midwest Family Life Conference held in Chicago, October 15-18, 1959.

three times what it did at the turn of the century and is earned in two-thirds of his predecessor's working hours.

Perhaps the change in the scale of living is most effectively illustrated by reference to water, heat and light. At the beginning of the 19th century water was often carried from a nearby spring; by the end of the Civil War it was carried from a well in the yard; by 1939 running water, both hot and cold, was available in most workmen's homes in the United States. In 1800 illumination was supplied by the open fireplace in the kitchen and tallow candles elsewhere. In the decade following the Civil War lamps were in general use but candles were still common. By 1939 most homes had electric lights. In 1800 workmen's homes had no heat except from the kitchen fireplace. By the Civil War stoves were common but few families could afford to heat more than two rooms. By 1939 most workmen's homes were evenly heated.

Children profit

While the hours of the workingman were progressively shortened, a vast array of household appliances—better stoves, automatic washing machines, electric irons, sweepers and other aids lightened the burden of housekeeping. The gains for children were very great. A century ago workmen's children received a few years of schooling at the best. As late as 1901 only three out of four children between five and 15 years were in school. Only eight out of 100 children of high school age, including children from well-to-do families, were in school. By 1948, 58 per cent of all children of high school age were attending school. Among workmen's families in urban centers the ratio was much higher. In 1954, 18 out of 100 in

the college age bracket were enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Including all regions, north, south, east and west, the ratio today is about 24 out of 100. For urban centers it is much higher. In Detroit, which is predominantly a wage-earning community, the ratio is 35 out of 100.

Incomes rise

Despite the vast increase of leisure for the workingman's family, the money available for optional purposes, after supplying the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter, has risen rapidly. In 1870 it was about 10 per cent of the wage earner's income. By 1901 it had risen to 17 per cent and by 1948 to 36 per cent or more. When it is remembered that these percentages relate to ever-rising incomes, it is clear that this generation has more than ten times the money available for optional expenditures that its grandparents had.

2. *The household has ceased to be the place where the family makes its living.* In the agricultural society of the past the family made its living at home. While the father, with his older sons, tilled the fields, the female members of the family not only kept the house but prepared and produced a substantial part of the commodities which the family used. They grew, gathered and preserved vegetables and fruit, made clothing, and often shared in the care of the food-producing animals, feeding chickens, milking cows, and marketing butter and eggs. As a result, children from their earliest years learned from their parents the skills needed in making a living.

The development of our modern economy first removed the father's work place from the home. Gradually

it eliminated opportunities for the female members of the family to contribute to the production of commodities which the family used, the milk cow (it was Mrs. O'Leary's cow that kicked over the lantern), the domestic fowls, the subsistence garden, the preserving of food, the baking of bread, the manufacture of clothing, even much of the laundry and cooking.

The unmarried woman was quick to follow her father and brothers into paid employment. At the beginning of the 19th century it was taken for granted that male members of the family should provide a home for unmarried daughters and sisters and that these unmarried females should earn their living by the work within the household. When factories and offices offered work to women, public opinion first disapproved, then came to tolerate, and finally to expect that unmarried women should earn their own living.

Working wives

The decline of the home as a center of economic production also saw married women in increasing numbers taking paid employment. Today 30 per cent of all married women work for pay outside their homes. The proportion of working wives varies widely, of course, with their ages. There appears to be an increasing tendency for married women to work until the birth of their first child, then to retire from the labor market until the children are of school age or somewhat older and then to re-enter it.

With the decline of the home as the producing unit the opportunity for children to contribute to the family's income diminished. With this change, too, the opportunity for home train-

ing in the skills needed for earning a living was lost, and this aspect of education, as well as schooling proper, was turned over to outsiders. One important consequence is that the cost of rearing and educating children has become a greater burden in the modern family.

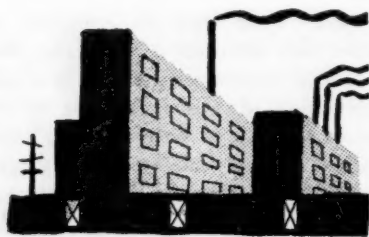
Changing status

This same change has vastly affected the status of older people. In the past older members of the family, as long as they retained their health, were able to contribute to the family's living. This was true not only on the farm but also in the shops of the self-employed artisan. In the modern household today there is little opportunity for its oldest members to make any economic contribution.

Quite apart from its economic aspects, this situation deprives the older people of needed self-respect. A simple illustration of this fact came to my notice recently. A retired father, living with a married daughter, had the responsibility during the day of supervising a grandchild of preschool age. He spent the greater part of each afternoon with the child in the park and the playground, supervising the child's play and teaching him the names of birds, flowers and plants. The old gentleman was occupied, useful and happy. Then the youngster began attending school. The old man lost his last useful task and has visibly aged ten years. Where formerly his carriage was upright and his step was light, he now goes around bent over a cane.

3. *We have become a nation of wage earners and, despite our material prosperity, psychologically insecure.* Today, three out of four people are wage earners; in the nonagricultural segment of

the economy more than eight out of ten work for others. What property the family holds is no longer a means of production. Since the family is job dependent and must follow the opportunities for work, it has become more mobile, with all the dislocations which mobility introduces. It is also, psychologically at least, more insecure because the family's continued income depends upon the health of its income earners and their ability to keep employed. Our generation follows the employment statistics as closely as the stewards of Pharaoh watched the level in the granaries during the years of famine.



For the major breadwinner life has become more competitive. This is obviously true in those occupations where advancement is dependent upon recognition of achievement. The higher-ranking clerk who would become a junior executive, as well as the junior executive who would move upward, must be continually demonstrating the qualities that merit advancement. A similar pressure exists over a wide range of production jobs which are paid incentive-type wages and where acquired skills and work routines must be continually adapted to changing products

and techniques. It is often said, especially by people who get their knowledge of American industry from French literature, that the modern factory is a place of deadly monotony where the machine is the master and the man is the servant. My own impression is that this criticism is not sound for the hundreds of mills and factories which I have seen. While conceding that many jobs should be made more interesting, I would judge that modern industry affords considerable psychological satisfaction. My point, however, is that the jobs are exacting and when compared with the situation in the past, where the farmer and artisan chose their own routines, they require a higher expenditure of nervous energy.

4. *Today, unlike in the past, the young must prepare for and then find jobs by which they will earn their families' living.* In an agricultural society the youth approaching manhood has no problem of choosing a vocation. Trained for his craft since childhood, he takes over the south 40 acres of the parental farm and is in business. In the simple urban communities the situation was similar. The jobs which industry offered required little training and most of it could be gained while working. The young man from a family which could train its sons for business or one of the few professions usually had a place waiting for him in his father's establishment. Today, however, the youth must spend years in general and specific preparation, must elect a career from a baffling array of choices, about which he really is almost totally uninformed, and then find or make his place in economic society. Nor is the striving ended when the young man gets his first job. If he is to rise above the lowest

level in his field, he must continually prove and improve himself.

This necessity of preparing for and finding a place in the economic world vastly increases the cost of education and confronts young people with decisions they are ill-equipped to make and about which parents are often unable to offer sound advice.

5. *Despite higher incomes the modern family, especially the modern young family, is burdened with debt.* Debt, I suppose, has always been a specter for families, especially for young families, but in the past it was incurred cautiously and often involuntarily. Today, however, household financing by credit has become part of our way of life and many young families boldly mortgage their income for months ahead. Private, noncorporate, nonfarm debt, both mortgage and nonmortgage increased from \$43 billion in 1940 to \$216 billion in 1958. Private, noncorporate, nonfarm, nonmortgage debt increased from \$17.9 billion in 1940 to \$72.1 billion in 1958. In August of last year consumer installment credit alone was \$37 billion. Spread over 50 million households this represents an average in installment debt alone of \$740 per family. Add other forms of debt and it becomes clear that many families have committed their optional incomes for months, if not years, in advance.

Problems examined

This sketchy outline of changes in the economic environment must suffice as a background for discussion of some family problems.

We could spend much time in debating whether life today is more humane than it was for our grandfathers, whether our problems are more or fewer,

whether lighter or more taxing. This, I concede, might be stimulating; for our immediate purposes it is somewhat idle speculation. Our grandparents had their problems; today's problems, while different, are our problems; our best course is to take a hard look at them.

Increased skills demanded

Let us look first at the problem of young men and young women preparing themselves from afar to assume the responsibilities of mature life and parenthood. Blue-collar jobs are, relatively speaking, becoming rarer and applicants for white-collar jobs are being asked not about years of high school but about years of college instruction. And with progressive automation the quality of training for higher-skilled blue-collar jobs is increasing.

In urban power plants 35 years ago, to use one example, there was a wide variety of jobs to be filled by relatively unskilled workmen. In a modern power plant the unskilled jobs are few and many of the skilled technicians have six or more years of training behind them. Not merely individual power plants but entire systems are highly automatic. I saw Kansas City deliver power to St. Louis in response to a telephone call. An operator in Kansas City turned a small manual switch on a console in front of him. In response to this signal the most efficient idle generating unit in the Kansas City system began to deliver power. Pulverized coal was blown into a boiler and an auxiliary motor began to turn a turbine. With the turbine rolling at a predetermined speed, steam was automatically fed to it. As power developed and reached the proper potential, the turning of another switch fed the current into the Kansas City

system and automatically through a tie-line to St. Louis.

It should need no demonstration to indicate the high level of mechanical, electronic and electrical skills which are needed to set up and maintain such a complicated system. The technicians whom I met, who maintained this system, had behind them four years apprenticeship as electricians or mechanics and a minimum of two years additional training, supplemented in some cases by study of electricity and electronics in night courses at universities. All of them did a considerable amount of home study to keep abreast of ever-changing and improving electronic control systems. What has happened in the electrical power plant is occurring and will continue to occur in varying degrees in industry generally.

This process forces us to ask certain very practical questions. How many of our high school graduates are prepared, either scholastically or even psychologically, for the training that will be required of skilled mechanics of the future? A friend of mine who employs many high school graduates told me that he made a bet with a visitor to his plant that none of the first six youngsters whom he asked would correctly answer the question, "How many sixteenths are there in an inch?" The first asked shrugged his shoulders; the second guessed that there were 12; the third put it at 18; the fourth, a girl, said, "Are you kidding?" My friend took this as a correct answer and paid the bet. The story may be farfetched and the situation untypical but it is worth asking how many high school graduates can handle the mathematics in a machinist's handbook? How many

graduates are psychologically prepared to undertake the training needed to become first-class mechanical technicians? If they can get \$2 an hour for pumping gas, why should they sweat out four to six years learning a demanding skill? And why should we expect the immature high school graduate to be qualified on his own to recognize the importance of such decisions?

I mention the training of craftsmen merely to emphasize that the requirement of increased training is universal. Most young men will make their living in white-collar occupations and will compete with college graduates. Within 15 years two of every three persons in the appropriate age group will enter college.

Social life distracting

In the light of this need for longer and better scholastic training are we fair to children when we tolerate and even encourage social mores which often lead to marriage before the boy has completed, or even begun, his college training? I have the impression that today the social life is more distracting and time-consuming in high school than in college.

What is said about education for the boy applies with only slightly less cogency for the girl. Not all women marry, and among the married, death, illness or separation can make women heads of families. Eight out of every 100 households in the United States are headed by women and in 40 per cent of these households there are one or more children under 18 years of age. Some marketable skill, furbished by some use in actual employment, is one of the cheapest forms of insurance that a girl can bring to marriage. Possibly, even

our condemnation of working wives should be made with greater discrimination. Among the 12 million wives in the labor force there must be close to 4 million Catholics. Are we ready to assert without better studies than we now have that the majority of them submit to factory or office discipline for wholly indefensible reasons and that work for pay is universally incompatible with their responsibilities to their families?

Save before marriage

Assuming that the young couple is prepared by training for the responsibilities of rearing and training a family, modern living would seem to require a modicum of saving before marriage is actually contracted. Price and Martha Patton, who have written a management guide for young adults, *Money in Your Pocket*, said in an earlier book that "Any couple beginning married life should have enough money saved to cover the cost of essential furniture and other necessities, plus a small emergency fund. Every couple should have these two funds and no outstanding debts of any kind." For the newly-married, they state that: "Two or even one months' salary saved may be sufficient if there are definite plans to bring the fund up to three months' minimum within the first year." The booklet, *Personal Money Management*, published by the American Bankers' Association, is more conservative. It states, "Experience teaches us that a family of moderate income should have a nest egg of savings equal to at least six months' earnings."

Modern living calls for considerable skill in money management. After the primary needs of food, shelter and clothing have been met, there is usually

available a substantial portion of the income for so-called "optional" expenditures. This is not saying that the family has money which it does not need but rather that it has choice in meeting less-urgent needs. The family must decide how it will spend this money, a decision that begins almost with the first day of engagement—the kind of ring, the cost of the wedding, the location of the home, whether a new house in the suburbs or a less-expensive house in an older section. Is an automobile an immediate necessity? This is in part determined by the location of the home and the availability of public transportation. After essential household furnishings, which include refrigerator, stove, and automatic washer, there is a continuing parade of other decisions, a dishwasher, a drier, color television, a car or a better car, medical insurance, life insurance, savings, or better education for the children.

The cost of bearing and rearing children under modern urban conditions has increased considerably. Estimates vary a great deal, but the initial expenses associated with having a baby under modern conditions apparently run somewhere between \$200 and \$500. The cost of maintaining the first baby during the first year in a middle-class, urban home has been estimated at about \$600. This figure assumes that the young parents had to buy everything that was used for the baby, so that if they had to purchase only food and diapers, they could probably get by for about \$150. What does it cost to rear a child to maturity? Although no current estimates are available, we might consider the federal income tax deduction

figure as the average yearly expense. Since taxpayers are allowed a deduction of \$600 for each dependent, the cost of maintaining a child through 20 years of dependence would be \$12,000. Many feel that this figure is far too conservative. For example, in 1944 the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company estimated the total cost of rearing a child to age 18, for families with incomes between \$5,000 and \$10,000, to be about \$20,000.

Arthur S. Flemming, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, reports that the cost of a college education has jumped about 33 per cent over the past four years and will rise at least as much again during the four years ahead. One may question the validity of such estimates but there can be no doubt that the cost of bearing and rearing children under modern urban conditions calls for considerable foresight and planning.

To what extent will the family go into debt? How many people understand the real costs of installment buying? How few read carefully the purchase contract? How many young people stop to think that 18 monthly payments of \$25 for a \$300 appliance amount to \$450? The installment credit held by commercial banks, largely through their recently-adopted revolving credit plans, has grown from less than \$9 billion in 1950 to more than \$14 billion today. These plans, if wisely used, can reduce the cost of credit financing for many people and, by making them less dependent on the charge account, enable them to make many of their purchases more cheaply. But it is easy to pyramid debts. For the improvident these plans could become another source of easy debt creation.

Skill in money management is acquired by training and parents have some responsibility in forcing their children to learn early to budget expenses. Children today have, by past standards, a great deal of spending money. Parents periodically make them rather expensive gifts. Would it not be feasible to determine how much money the children shall be allowed and to give it to them with the understanding that by saving they should accumulate toward the purchase of the things they want or need? It is important to train children to make responsible decisions. People do not become adult merely by reaching a certain age. They become adult because they have developed responsibility and spiritual maturity.

Old age

A few words in closing about the problems of old age. Social insurance is making older people to some extent economically independent but most of them are ill prepared for the medical expenses which so often increase as people grow older. Unfortunately, at the time in life when most couples could be saving for old age, their own family expenses are highest. It is a paradox that as improved medicine is increasing life expectancy, industrial policies are lowering the age of retirement. We must give greater thought to finding useful occupations for older people not merely to enable them to meet in part their economic needs but also to preserve their essential human dignity.

Some of the things I have said may be controversial. I do not pose as a marriage counselor. To paraphrase Montaigne: Had I the right to be believed, I would have spoken less boldly.

The Church And Social Welfare

SWITHUN BOWERS, O.M.I.

IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEST the Church was a pioneer in the development of many of the external works of charity, hospitals, almshouses, orphanages—the forerunners of many of our modern social services. In many of the underdeveloped parts of the world the Church today is still doing much of this pioneering work, a fact which I personally observed on a trip to Asia. In Hong Kong, for example, where over two million refugees from China have crowded into a tiny oasis, only 20 miles long and 20 miles wide, the Church—indeed all the churches—are doing an astonishing job caring for these refugees, devising ways in which they can get at least a bare minimal livelihood, and doing it without purpose of proselytism, out of love, as a witness to the love of Christ. In Japan, where the very concept of social service was until recently alien to the nation's cultural and value system so that the actual social services are quite underdeveloped, the Imperial Government last year honored 53 foreigners who had, in notable measure, contributed to the development of social services in Japan. Forty-seven of the 53 were Catholics, and this in a country where Catholics are less than one-half of one per cent of the population. In that area of hu-

man activity and aspiration which, in this century, we have come to call "the field of social welfare," the Church has always sought, and still seeks, to bear witness to the love of Christ.

Social welfare is a rather broad and somewhat elusive term. In general, it is understood today as the total organized network of services, provisions and efforts to promote the well-being of human society and of individuals and groups as members of society. Much of this effort and most of the social services are immediately directed toward remedying or alleviating unfavorable conditions of life in society or in a community. In this sense, social welfare is not and cannot be the fenced encampment of any particular group or profession. All, laity and clergy, the different professions and callings, have a stake in it and have an obligation, from their own particular competence, to contribute to it. But if this contribution is to be part of "social welfare," it cannot be a completely solo performance by some lone virtuoso, admirable in itself as this may be. It should be related in some way to the total pattern of services in a community.

Father Bowers is Dean of the School of Social Welfare of the University of Ottawa.

Social work is professional competence

Social work is not synonymous with social welfare. Social work does, however, play an important role in both the development of social welfare policy and in the operation of social welfare services. Social work is a communicable professional competence in which knowledge of interpersonal relationships and skills in working with people, singly or in groups, are used to help people toward a greater degree of social adequacy. "Social adequacy" here refers to the way in which people fulfill their social roles, the role of husband, of wife, or parent, of son or daughter, of member of some group. Social work uses its knowledge and its skills to help people function more adequately in these vital and habitual social roles; this objective is, of course, important for the well-being of both society and the individual. Social work agencies are an integral part of the total pattern of social welfare; moreover, the principles underlying social work, which have been garnered from social work practice and experience, have significant meaning for the whole welfare field. I would go even further: I think they have significance for all who work in any close and intimate relationship with people.

Social work as a professional discipline developed in this century, and it developed, it has been rather aptly said, because humanitarianism was in search of a method.¹ Perhaps we might say, to maintain the metaphor, that "baptized" social work grew out of a Christian humanism in search of a method. The method evolved slowly and unevenly,

sometimes in stumbling fashion, with many regional, local, and individual lags. Even the current refinement of both method and purpose does not exist to the same degree everywhere and among all social workers. The whole content of training, for example, has changed radically in the last decade. This often causes difficulty in interpreting social work to the public, a difficulty heightened by the fact that many social work positions are held by "occupational social workers" rather than by professional social workers. There is also considerable variation in the standards of practice in different social agencies, sometimes in the one community, as well as in different communities.



Despite these lags and these difficulties, social work has proved itself to the point where the present day demand for professional social workers is, at least, ten times greater than the number graduated each year from the universities. Today, social work is not only accepted as a necessary community service in the traditional social agencies, the family and child welfare services, but it is in ever-increasing demand and is valued as an important adjunct in psychiatric services for both children and adults, in hospital services, in rehabilitation programs for the physically handicapped, in correctional work with both juvenile and adult offenders, in in-

¹ Nathan E. Cohen, *Social Work in the American Tradition*. Dryden Press, New York, 1958, p. 3.

stitutional services for children and for the aged, and in the school systems. Psychiatrists in many of the larger cities are engaging social workers to assist them in their private practice and some private schools are using them as counsellors to students.

Some of us have been quite concerned about this broad extension which has tended to drain away so many social workers from what we consider the basic social services, the family and child welfare agencies. A personal experience may underscore the difficulty. Last year I received a letter from one of the largest industrial concerns in Canada asking if I could interest a graduate of our school in taking employment with them as a social worker. The writer stated that the company had become quite concerned about the high incidence of social problems among their employees and wanted to provide a skilled social work service for them in the same manner as they provided a medical service. Much as I appreciated the recognition of social work competence from this unexpected source, I did not feel I could encourage someone to take up the offer at a time when our basic social services are so inadequately staffed.

Profession misunderstood

Although, in one sense, too many have been beating a path to the social work door, the social worker is looked upon by many with suspicion or, at least, with many reservations. Many religious-minded people, including some of the clergy, have not been overly favorably disposed toward this new and upstart profession. In part, this is a result of a misunderstanding of the nature and function of social work, a misunderstanding for which we social

workers must take much of the blame, since thus far we have not been very skillful in explaining effectively our vocation and activities. On the other hand, it is partially the result of some distrust of what is called "organized charity," which is thought of as tending to supplant and suppress the religious obligation of charity which rests upon the individual. When this objection is made, "charity" often seems to be equated with the meeting or the relief of elemental temporal needs—such basic needs as food, clothing, and shelter.



When and where such need exists, it must be met, met surely, certainly, and adequately, for these needs pertain to the basic right of man to life. The meeting of such needs cannot be left to individual volition, to the vagaries of individual inclination or perhaps whim or to individual ability or readiness to meet them. If these needs are to be met with certainty in our complex, contemporary society, this can only be done in an organized way through the instrumentality of the state, the political and governmental organization of society. Social work agencies, operating under voluntary auspices, have long given up the dispensing of financial assistance, except occasionally in a supplemental way, or in regions of social welfare where peculiar conditions prevail. The resources of social welfare agencies were such that they could never adequately and in all instances meet the need; as long, moreover, as they continued to try to do so in a

partial way, they gave to governmental bodies an excuse to evade a social obligation—which some were very ready to do. We may have good reason to be chary of the growing encroachment of the state upon the life of the individual. Surely, in the order of realities, however, it is only through the state that this basic right can be ensured to all.

Scope for personal charity

The practice of individual charity is, of course, not always limited to paying taxes to be distributed in welfare services; its possibilities also extend to the area of social needs, the needs of human relationship. No matter who we are, in our day-to-day life there is so much we can give, as individuals, of this charity, if we will. Greater things than perhaps we ever imagine are wrought through the word of encouragement, of sympathy, of concern, by the simple actions that show our respect for human worth and dignity in each and all of God's children, our fellows, and by the charity of our secret prayers. There is no competition nor conflict with an organized professional service here. No one suggests any suppression, or supplanting of the good that we all can do as interested individuals, if we want to give to others something of ourselves, a gift far more precious than the giving of our goods. Here there are no lines of demarcation we must not cross, for as love is infinite so are the acts of love.

But so often what we want to do is the spectacular and the big. We want to solve difficult problems, problems that have baffled others. Perhaps unconsciously we want to have the inner reassurance that we are not like unto other men, inadequate, unsure, confused; perhaps we try to build our own

security by pushing ourselves into the role of counsellor to the insecure. Is there anything fundamentally wrong in trying to help our neighbor with his social problem? No . . . but let us hope and try that our efforts spring from charity not vanity; let us also try to ensure that we do not get out of our depth and do not presume a knowledge and a competence that we may not have. (This counsel, incidentally, is just as incumbent on the professional social worker as it is on the lay person.) There are simple problems of relationship and of role and there are very complex ones. If we get involved in the complex ones, then we must be prepared to give them a great deal of time and patience and draw on a greater range of knowledge than we will commonly have, unless we have specially prepared ourselves for this function. If we have not this time nor this knowledge, we will probably end up by doing harm rather than the good we desired. And then, perhaps, we will expect the social work agency to pick up the pieces. Or we may expect them, even demand of them, to repeat the counsel we have given.



The social worker does not tell people what to do nor, strictly speaking, does he advise people what would be best for them to do. Social workers learned long ago that very few people

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really want advice on their personal social problems, no matter how insistently they ask or even demand "What should I do?" What such people are really looking for is someone to agree with what they have more or less already decided on, so that they can shift the responsibility if things go awry or can lay at the feet of the other the blame for consequences or side-effects that they foresee and about which they would feel guilty.

Key to success

What the social worker does is try to understand the total reality of the client's situation and problem and his part in it. The social worker then helps the client to see and examine this full reality (so many of these problems arise because he partializes or falsifies the reality). Next, the social worker aids him to consider all alternatives of action that are possible for him, helping him evaluate the likely consequence of each (again, so often, for a variety of reasons, he can only see one or two choices of action and needs help in getting a broader and fuller view). Always the social worker leaves the client free to make his own choice, supporting and facilitating the carrying out of his choice, if it gives any promise of being a constructive one.

The bishops of many of our dioceses have seen the value of such a professional service as an adjunct to the work and mission of the Church. Problems in the performance of social roles, particularly in the roles of spouse, of parent, of child, can have many spiritual implications and can provide obstacles to divine grace and to the salvation of souls. They have thought it part of this apostolic commission to provide services for

their people whereby they can be helped with these problems but helped in a way that is in harmony with the spiritual values which we hold and to which we must give primacy. The general community has recognized—and we should honor the understanding they have shown of our viewpoint—the place of such agencies in the total social welfare pattern and has recognized that these agencies have social value for society and for the community as well as spiritual value to the Church. Not all dioceses have sponsored such social work services, nor are the professional standards of practice of equal merit in those that do exist.



We must try to understand and employ all that is valid and appropriate from psychological and social science and from modern techniques; at the same time we must preserve the truth and the values which are our heritage. Then we will be ready to give eternal meaning to all "the fruits of the progress of the human mind" by the spirit of charity which has always been and always shall be the mark of true Christian service.

THOMAS HILL GREEN, the eloquent and severe critic of laissez-faire Victorian morality, once remarked that it was ridiculous to ask each and every member of a society to be a responsible person when that society did not provide the vast majority of its members with the conditions necessary to build those qualities essential for responsible living. Green was, of course, sharply and specifically criticizing those classical economists who expected every man to "make his way" in the world by simply being set free—a condition which a more mature 20th century has seen as a mythical freedom unless the economic power of all the free agents approaches, in fact, some kind of equality.

But even though Green's adage was applied specifically to the Victorian cosmos, it might well serve today to point up the problem of finding a solution to the crisis that is today causing the United States so much trouble both here and abroad—intellectual apathy on the part of too many of its citizens. For behind all the recent and pathetic attempts since Sputnik to make Americans intellectually inquisitive; behind all the awardings of "science" scholarships; behind, in short, all the utilitarian exhortations of our educationists, lies the real cause of our troubles—a condition which, if not eradicated in the near future, bids fair to make it impossible for the vast majority of Americans to develop those qualities which will make them responsible and surviving world citizens.

What is this condition? It is simply that a dangerously large percentage of the American people lack historical perspective or, if you will, a sense of history. And it would be the contention

Wanted:

here that until such a condition is removed, this lack of historical perspective will continue, as it has increasingly in the last 50 years, to double and intensify so as to prevent the solution of many of the problems Americans face today and will inevitably face tomorrow in a rapidly changing world.

Here, it would be argued, is the real cause of our troubles, the real driving force behind our intellectual apathy, our contempt for thought, our disbelief that education—not merely inventiveness—could in any way be useful. Here is the basic cause of our inability to see the problems of others, to understand that for socio-economic reasons all nations cannot be like us, to grasp the fact, for that matter, that even our own "free enterprise" system is not a God-ordained system admitting of no other but is merely a very young and legitimately variable expression of the natural law, subject to change as times change so that the immutable principles of that law will be preserved.

Of course to any thoughtful observer of the American scene over the last 30 odd years the conclusion that it is a lack of historical perspective which is at the root of most of our troubles would hardly come as a startling revelation.

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a Sense of History

JOHN J. WHEALEN

For the symptoms were there in abundance.

To name only a few, there was the blind and vituperative opposition to the "socialistic" New Deal which, in a Western world sliding rapidly into the regimented and planned societies of either fascism or communism, was surely a mild remedy in comparison with the earlier and more drastic steps taken by other middle-class countries to solve the grave social problems created by the ideology and practices of an atomistic, classical economics. There was the stubborn and near disastrous adherence to an increasingly impossible "storm cellar" concept of world affairs in the years after World War I which not only led to the spurning of any type of peace machinery, but to the spurning of defense measures themselves in a world now bereft of any safeguards against the potential bully. It would be well to remember in this context that as late as August, 1941 the draft extension bill passed in the House of Representatives by *one* vote (203 to 202). Finally, there is even today hysteria that a budget of \$80 billions—in a country whose Gross National Product is something like \$420 billions—will bankrupt us; there is strong resistance to aid countries which

are trying to solve their problems by use of public power dams; and great reluctance to allocate as much as \$3.9 billions of the budget to what the press and many congressmen naively tell the public are "giveaway" programs.

Here is a sorry record indeed, one which, if time, luck, and a lot of natural resources had not been on our side, could have had a tragic outcome. This is not to say, of course, that Americans have not risen to these occasions and made great sacrifices. But it is perhaps superfluous to point out that many of these sacrifices have been needlessly greater precisely because the problems which gave rise to them were not faced and attacked earlier and with intelligence, perspective intelligence. Witness the economic inequities, the misery and poverty we suffered up to and including the Great Depression years before we grasped and then gave second assent to the fact that the economy was not a just, self-regulating machine. Note the lives and money spent in World War II precisely because we learned—almost too late—that aggression threatens all, that our so-called Neutrality Laws, rightly called by Pres-

Mr. Whealen is a Professor of History at Xavier University, Cincinnati.

ident Roosevelt a retreat from neutrality, merely encouraged the bully to divide and conquer, that whining about "war debts" and raising tariff barriers are self-contradictory actions. Calculate, in short, our costly flirtings with disaster simply because our people have not seen quickly enough that the 20th century is here to stay and that no people can, or ever could, survive by ignoring the necessity of adapting their principles to the present, the here and now. But, of course, a readiness for adapting to the present for the purpose of retaining one's greatness, presupposes a people who suffer from no illusions about what *really* made them great in the past. And this in turn presupposes that very condition lacking on the American mental scene, historical perspective.

The solution

All very well and good, it might be answered. But how correct such a condition, how give the American people overnight a sense of history that will enable them to build the qualities of mind that will make them responsible and surviving world citizens during the *next* 50 years? The solution to that problem, it would be here contended, lies not in wasting our time assigning personal culpability for the situation but in exploring first of all *why* this condition exists and, with this information in hand, deciding *what* can be done about it. And done before we become (to paraphrase Santayana) those people who did not know history and were thus doomed to relive it.

At first sight, however, it seems almost impossible to get any clear-cut and easy answer to the question of why the American public is so woefully lacking in historical perspective. For this is

not a simple situation of Americans being illiterate, historically or otherwise. On the contrary, America boasts an high literacy rate, prides itself on its schools, and, more particularly, fairly beams when the conversation turns to its voluminous historiography, superb and erudite historians, and diverse historical journals of world-wide repute. Why, then, with all this has the man in the street, for whom ostensibly all this activity goes on, show so little of that broadness of historical view which manifests itself in a willingness to see oneself and one's nation in the context of the past and adapt to the changing times?

The answer lies not in the innate characteristics of the American people who are, after all, but transplanted Europeans. It lies in the history of this country itself, a history which unfolds to us the record of a nation which until the last 30 odd years has had few very serious problems and has produced, as a consequence, a people who have literally had no use for history!

But let us explain. To begin with, it should never be forgotten (although it usually is) that until some 50 years ago the Western World was still enjoying the 400-year old westward expansionist binge which began in 1492. Now the present day United States made up but a part of this expansion, but it was a large part.

Moreover, by the middle of the 18th century, and increasingly so after the break with England, it was evident that the United States was destined to be the Cinderella nation of the binge. For by the opening of the 19th century, the United States found itself as the real child of the Renaissance, fulfilling all

the dreams of the new humanism. It had a stable, democratic society made possible not only by its heritage of the Anglo-Saxon habits of self-government, but also, and no less importantly, by its abundant land and natural resources, which made property for all a real possibility.

And it had peace. For from 1814 to 1914 a balance of power obtained in Europe. It was this balance, fully as much as the fact that the United States was 3,000 miles away from the contentious mother countries, which allowed the nation to develop slowly, peacefully, and in a most carefree manner. Even as early as this, however, most Americans, with as little awareness of the facts of life as they today manifest, attributed the reason for this state of affairs solely to Monroe's bumptious message and not at all to conditions in Europe.

In addition to all this, however, one more factor of equal importance must be mentioned. At the very time the United States was becoming a member nation in the Western World, a new type of society, the middle-class society, was coming into its own in that same Western World. Now there is much that can be, and has been, said about the members of a middle-class society but for our purposes here there is one characteristic which must be emphasized.

This is the almost neurotic wish of the middle class to crystallize its type of society. This desire is coupled with an equally fervent belief that any attempted deviation from such a society—which the middle class, for good reasons and bad, believes to be the only and best type of society—must be the work of

fools or criminals. And, of course, precisely because the nature of a middle-class society demands a preoccupation of its "solid" citizens with the fulfillment of the acquisitive instinct, it follows usually that the members of such a society have little awareness of a need to change anything, anywhere, anytime.

Causes of innocence

Now it hardly need be said that a combination of these factors—peace and plenty and a middle-class ethos—had dominated the American scene during most of the play. And if this be true, it should give us a pretty fair idea of what kind of people Americans will be and what kind of background they will bring with them to confront the problems of today, their first real problems.

Yet, if this be granted, should we really be surprised if the American people have no sense of history? For how can you have a sense of history when you have had literally no use for history, no compelling reason to study it except to glorify a highly successful past, the reasons for which you have not bothered to understand? For that matter, how can you have any use for education in general? After all, the real practical uses of education will hardly be valued in a context where its only tangible uses seem to be the ability it gives one to write a decent business letter or "make contacts" in college in order to be successful in an already organized society!

In short, are we not rather foolishly doing the same thing for which Thomas Hill Green criticized the Victorian Liberals? Are we not, in effect, asking the American people for the quality of domestic and world responsibility when, as a matter of fact, they have been

living under conditions which militate against their acquiring that very quality?

What can be done about this situation? For it is certain that whatever may be the reasons for our lack of historical perspective, we are going to need it more than ever in the next 50 years as the world prepares for the showdown on whether regimentation or freedom is to be the order of the day.

Here, it can be argued, history has begun to help us. For the American people are not fools. And not a few of them have been shaken—and thus enlightened—about the shape of things, about the “big picture,” so to speak, over the last 30 odd years.

But we cannot rely on the immediate experience of the past alone. For people die and their insights die with them. We are, therefore, going to have to turn to education. This time we cannot afford to let it degenerate into a mere “polishing” job. We are going to have

to use education as it was primarily intended to be used and felt, that is to say, as an effective, vicarious experience designed so to fit people for life that they will not have to learn completely and painfully from experience. Needless to say, history will be a key subject in such a program.

This, then, is a plea for history. It is not a plea in the usual sense. It does not come from one who is primarily interested in making every literate American a “culture” addict, a devotee of the “finer things of life” or, least of all, pedants aware of every useless piece of information about the Western World since the time of the Greeks. Rather, this is a plea for an increased emphasis upon the study of history in this country in order that we may utilize it, and all the ramifications flowing from a knowledge of it, as one of our indispensable weapons during the critical years ahead.

THE PROBLEM OF INTEREST

Robert J. McEwen, S.J. •

Father McEwen heads the Department of Economics at Boston College.

THIS BOOK is the fruit of 20 years of critical consideration of a fascinating problem involving economic science, social policy and moral philosophy.¹ A mind finely trained in both philosophical and economic science here explores the interrelationships of both disciplines as they shed light on the perennial problem of the ethics and economics of interest.

The qualifications of the author for such a task are impressive. Holding a

doctorate from the London School of Economics, Father Divine has added to his training in philosophy and theology nearly 20 years experience as a professor of economics and Dean of a College of Business. He was the chief founder of the Catholic Economic Association, its first President, and for the first 15 years

¹ **INTEREST—An Historical and Analytical Study in Economics and Modern Ethics.** By Reverend Thomas F. Divine, S.J. Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 254 pp. \$7.

the Editor-in-chief of its official journal, the *Review of Social Economy*.

The subtitle of the present work accurately indicates its three-fold division into roughly equal parts. Part One is historical—a chronological survey of religious and ethical thought on the morality of interest. Part Two is strictly analytical—the economic theory of capital and interest. Part Three is a moral synthesis presenting the author's conclusions on the morality of interest in the light of commutative, distributive and social justice. The author's justification of his order of procedure lies in "the fact that the development of the economic theory of interest is historically an outgrowth of the chronologically antecedent effort to solve the problem of the morality of 'contract or loan' interest." The whole work is marked by sober and careful scholarship, by sharp and penetrating economic analysis and by a deep concern for the social problems associated with interest and interest rates.

Father Divine has taken a new approach. While others have justified interest on titles extrinsic to the nature of economic interest, he is asking the "question which goes to the heart of the problem," namely, "can interest be justified on purely intrinsic grounds? From the very nature of economic interest, can an intrinsic title to interest on a money loan be proved to exist?"

For the record, the author's conclusions may be summarized in his own words as follows:

1. From the point of view of commutative justice, interest is morally justified as the market price of present income in terms of future income.
2. Interest as a functional share is warranted on grounds of distributive justice as a remuneration corresponding to the

value of the contribution of the services of capital to the total product of the economic system.

3. In view of the requirements of social justice: (a) an individual's right to interest in commutative justice may be superseded by an obligation to lend gratuitously to a needy borrower; (b) the state should by appropriate measures strive so to reduce existing inequalities of ownership of wealth that the functional share of interest may benefit as large a proportion of the population as possible; (c) the State should afford whatever protection is required in the field of small lending for consumption where forces of competition are less likely to operate on a wide scale; (d) economists are in quite general agreement that the government can, by a judicious use of monetary and fiscal policies, assist in achieving and maintaining a high level of employment and a fairly stable rate of economic growth—which would connote an obligation on the part of the State to assist in the attainment of those goals, and though there is less agreement regarding the importance to be attached to them in the changing phases of the cycle and other ebbs and flows of the price level and the level of employment, it is, nevertheless, conceded that policies which influence the interest rate are among the important and sometimes necessary means of achieving those ends.

From the foregoing it is evident that Father Divine's work is a fresh attempt to reinterpret Catholic social doctrine in the light of modern economic realities and with the assistance of the latest advances in our theoretical analysis of the economic system. As such this book deserves our most sincere commendation and merits equally careful study.

However, this reviewer has several animadversions on specific points. The historical section is revealing and interesting not merely for its own sake but for the scattered hints that foreshadow Father Divine's own explanation. For instance, he calls the function of money

as a store of value "an important element in a complete theory of interest" (p. 19). I am not sure that this notion is essential or intrinsic to lending and borrowing. It is nothing more than an historical accident that money has also functioned as a long-term store of value. Nothing intrinsic to the nature of money requires it to be more than a common denominator of value and a medium of payments. Another financial instrument could easily be the store of value. Indeed, there are authors who contend (rightly in this reviewer's opinion) that the performance of the money mechanism would be infinitely better if it were completely divorced from functioning as a store of value.

Secondly, Father Divine interprets much of the traditional treatment of interest by ecclesiastical writers as a concern for the social effects of interest rather than an examination of its intrinsic nature. He is, therefore, making it mainly a matter of social justice rather than commutative. Perhaps I would question this emphasis.

Next, while admitting that the Scholastics attempted to get at the intrinsic natures of lending and borrowing, he asserts that the "Scholastic analysis of usury was based wholly on the assumption of individual contracts in cases of isolated exchange", and thus became slightly obsolete with the development

of a competitive market for money and capital and the emergence of a market rate of interest. This, together with the Scholastic failure to recognize the "importance and legitimacy of time as an element of value-determination," makes it quite difficult, in the author's opinion, to apply their doctrine on interest to a modern setting. I must confess that I am disturbed by the author's constant appeal to the notions of time and time-preference as vital ingredients in the solution of the interest problem. I have the feeling that this is going to serve as an obstacle to mutual understanding and perhaps even prevent the substantial agreement which I think is merited by his fine exposition of a just price theory and its application to the interest problem.

This problem of interest has stirred the imagination, aroused the emotions and exercised the intellects of men of all classes for centuries. Even now, in the halls of Congress and in the political debates of the coming year, it promises to become one of the chief topics of debate for the American people. Father Divine's book should cause us to clarify our own thinking on these problems; it should, moreover, bring closer the day when we may present an intellectually respectable and generally accepted Catholic position on money and interest.

Books

W. E. B. DU BOIS: *Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis*. By Francis L. Broderick. Stanford University Press. 259 pp. \$5

The subject of this book was born in 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He is now 91, and most of his life he has been a controversial figure.

The reviewer first saw him in 1910, at a time when articulate Negroes were divided in two camps. Conservative members of the race supported Booker T. Washington's view that white and black Americans, uniting in economic cooperation, could with mutual profit share the nation's bounty, postponing political problems for

future solution. Their slogan was: socially as separate as the fingers, economically as single as the hand. Militant Negroes rejected this "separate but equal" compromise and supported Du Bois in his demand for manhood equality. The latter faction now includes the bulk of Negro leadership.

Although his ideas have prevailed over those of Booker Washington, Du Bois has never been a popular leader. He is a complex personality—a blend of scholar, poet and pragmatist—who confuses his followers while inspiring them. Those willing to follow the chauvinist cannot understand his pragmatic expediency. As fast as he wins zealous converts, he loses disillusioned disciples, his followers breaking up in fragments, bickering among themselves as bitterly as they denounce the general opposition. He has inspired few lasting loyalties and has acquired many implacable enemies.

As admirers and detractors, bemused by the current facet of the mercurial Du Bois personality, frequently reverse their positions, neutral opinion on his significance in the ideology of race relations is as rare as a white blackbird. Mr. Broderick's book is the first objective appraisal of the man and his impact on the American interracial climate that has ever come to the attention of this reviewer. The author, after noting Du Bois' immediate ancestry, follows his career from boyhood to his trial for subversion half a century later. There are few revelations that were not previously known to informed Negroes; there is little that is new to the smaller number who are familiar with Du Bois' own writings. What gives Mr. Broderick's work distinction is his meticulous detailing of knowledge already possessed by many of his prospective readers.

The volume may, however, be more revealing to white readers, especially those recently converted to the cause of integration. The latter will learn that Du Bois—scoffing at the fright words, "social equality," as sheer nonsense—was the first militant integrationist. While the book is unavoidably biographical, the author's emphasis is on a career rather than on a person. Mr. Broderick is less interested in Du Bois as a man than in his ideas and their influence on interracial attitudes.

A conspicuous feature of the book is the

author's familiarity with the progress or at least with the recurring changes and variety of opinion in the Negro world. Shortly after the turn of the century, as I have noted, Negro opinion was dominated by two giants, Washington and Du Bois. Seniority, prestige and powerful white allies were on the side of the former. Du Bois, the David in the arena, vanquished his antagonist but he has never, or at most only briefly, reached his stature as "the" leader of his race. Instead, the victor's own stature began to diminish at the moment of victory.

Only an author possessing intimate knowledge of the trends and vagaries of racial thinking in Negro society would know why Du Bois declined as a paramount leader of a race permeated by his ideas. One reason, Mr. Broderick explains, is that in many limited areas Du Bois has been eclipsed by local leaders more familiar with phases of interracial friction of special concern to their communities. Meanwhile, the speed and diversity of Negro progress has produced numerous men of outstanding ability who are specialists in the fields of education, journalism, labor and interracial diplomacy. No single leader can today speak as the representative of the race, as was once the privilege of Washington. Still, for a whole generation, Du Bois was the most respected Negro voice. And Professor Broderick reminds us that: "No one else could speak so effectively to a national audience. . . . The irony was that, though he spoke with authority, the complexity of Negro progress made a consistent policy all but impossible."

Du Bois is one of the greatest men his race has produced in America. He has made a large and provocative contribution to the nation's fund of dynamic ideas. To mention only one, he said that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line. Now, for proof, look around at the world, as reflected in the daily newspaper. Du Bois is not an infallible man, nor one as wise as he probably once thought he was. But he is beyond doubt an outstanding man of our age. Mr. Broderick's book helps us to understand him better.

THEOPHILUS LEWIS
Catholic Interracial Council
New York, N. Y.

THE EXPLODING METROPOLIS. By the editors of *Fortune*. Doubleday, New York. 193 pp. \$3.95

In the midst of unprecedented urban growth, the editors of *Fortune* magazine sound a clarion call for some hard, rational thinking about what is happening to our cities. They do this by directing attention to the vast agglomerations of people in metropolitan centers, to the flight to suburbia and the danger of denuding the central city of its leaders, and to the physical deterioration and blight in the core of the cities. They indict the public planners for their suburban complex and their failure to exploit the traditional strength of the city as the unifying element of the region. They deplore urban sprawl in which five acres of land are made to do the work of one, the ruthless bulldozing under of the countryside, and the irretrievable loss of open spaces and land resources. Finally, they make an eloquent plea for action now before we completely destroy the potentiality of the metropolitan area to provide a pleasant and culturally stimulating environment for its many millions of inhabitants.

The Exploding Metropolis presents no brief for metropolitan super-government. It insists that for better or worse, the problems which today plague our urban centers will have to be tackled through existing political institutions. It calls it sheer escapism for people to address their energies to schemes that require counties and suburbs to vote themselves out of existence. Taking a dim view of the many surveys that have been made to analyze the problems of the metropolis and to propose solutions, it argues that getting something done is primarily a matter of leadership rather than of research.

But from their lofty perch, the editors of *Fortune* are able to offer little that is new in the way of prescription. Among their suggestions are: revitalizing the downtown business district, energetic urban renewal programs, more imaginative city planning, a larger role for state government in urban affairs, and the purchase by public authorities of development rights to land in outlying areas. Under this last device—one that is well known in Great Britain—the state or some other govern-

mental body purchases development easements to land in the path of urban expansion. By not exercising this right, the public agency can keep the land open as a greenbelt, buy it later for parks, or permit the owner to develop it along lines conforming to a master plan for the region. The owner in the meantime is free to use the land for farming but he cannot convert it to residential subdivisions or other like purposes. This device to protect open sites and permit orderly development has obvious potentialities; however, the price of land around urban centers has already increased to the point where the purchase of development rights would be exceedingly costly.



The Exploding Metropolis is a highly effective piece of writing that convincingly describes the number one domestic problem facing this nation: the explosive growth of our urban areas. Although oversimplified at points and leaning to the dramatic, it is a book that should be read by every urbanite. Despite its already wide circulation, however, it is unlikely to stimulate any more action than the more learned and prosaic works on metropolitan problems which preceded it. As the persistent refusal of the voters to approve metropolitan reorganization plans demonstrates, the time is not ripe for a major overhauling of the present system. In commenting on the recent defeat of a metropolitan district proposal for the Saint Louis area, Mayor Tucker remarked that things would have to get a lot worse before people would accept any broad changes in the governmental pattern of our urban centers. They are, in other words, waiting for the compulsive evidence. Perhaps by that time it will be too late.

HENRY J. SCHMANDT
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee

THE EDUCATION OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN. By Frank C. Pierson and others. McGraw-Hill, New York. 740 pp. \$7.50

Along with the parallel Ford Foundation study, *Higher Education For Business*, by R. A. Gordon and J. E. Howell, this critical examination of college level programs in business administration, made possible by a Carnegie Corporation grant, is destined to be one of the most talked about books in a long time.

Just as the Carnegie Foundation sponsored Flexner Report in 1910 precipitated a revolution in the teaching of medicine, this book with its dreary picture of American business education is certain to have far-reaching repercussions in the educational philosophies underlying the nation's schools of business.

Except for the notable achievements of a handful of business schools on the graduate level, Mr. Pierson is not happy with the educational posture of our business schools. Not only are low caliber students receiving an inadequate general education but, insists Mr. Pierson, too many business courses are superficial, poorly taught and too highly specialized. Both as horrible examples of what business schools should not be doing and as candidates for a curriculum committee's knife, Mr. Pierson cites "hotel front-office procedures" and "principles of baking: bread and rolls."

The theme pervasive throughout the entire work is that academic standards need to be materially increased. To speed this development, Mr. Pierson suggests that colleges ought to engage in some soul-searching in an effort to define their distinctive role. If an assessment were made of each college's strengths and weaknesses, Mr. Pierson believes that business schools could then concentrate on the things they are qualified to do best. To upgrade quality, Mr. Pierson pleads for less specialization and more emphasis on liberal arts—English, mathematics, foreign languages, behavioral sciences and philosophy. He also calls for more restrictive admission policies, tighter grading and more emphasis on principles, analysis and problem-solving.

The Pierson report on this fast-growing segment of American education could not

have appeared at a more opportune time. There is still a fleeting interlude in the "race against time" and the prospects of mounting enrollments for college officials to consider—and hopefully to put into effect—the sensible recommendations embodied in this worthwhile book.

FRANCIS J. CORRIGAN
Saint Louis University

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS: Cooperation, Integration, Unification. By A. H. Robertson. Praeger, New York. 372 pp. \$7.75

Within a little more than a decade, European institutions have sprouted into a maze of initials, seldom understood except by the initiated. This is certainly the feeling of most of the Americans. We can take the word of A. H. Robertson, a British lawyer, that very many Europeans also share that impression. The fact underlines the need of a comprehensive description of the institutions which have been set up by various European countries for the purpose of intergovernmental cooperation or as presaging more intimate integration.

The present volume fulfills the essentials of this need. It is a handbook of the European institutions, giving the main data about their organizational structures and, in the appendices, the treaties or statutes which have authorized them. At the same time this book is a history of European unification, following the progress of the European idea, the setbacks which it encountered (for instance, the rejection in 1954 by the French Parliament of a European Defense Community) as well as the alternative routes it subsequently took (for instance, after the 1955 Messina Conference which gave rise to a new type of institution: the European Economic Community or Common Market, and Euratom).

Finally, reviewing a total of 15 diverse institutions, involving six, seven, 15 or 17 partners, Mr. Robertson discusses in an important final chapter the question of a rationalization of European institutions, with a view to their increased efficiency and their greater appeal to a rather confused public opinion.

In fact, such a rationalization is already pretty much under way, if we consider the

Six Powers or "Little Europe," the European Coal and Steel Community, The European Economic Community, and Euratom. These have now a single parliament, a single court of justice. The executive organs alone remain separate, inevitably so in view of fundamental functional differences of the organizations themselves.

The situation is much less heartening if we turn to the institutions grouping 15 or 17 European countries. Concerning these, A. H. Robertson reports the debates in progress during recent years and makes interesting proposals aiming at the establishment of a closer tie between OEEC (Organization for European Economic Cooperation) and the Council of Europe. His underlying idea is to revitalize the Council of Europe itself (Europe of the Fifteen), in other words, to prevent the idea of a Greater Europe being doomed to failure by the very success of the Six-Power, "Little Europe." The proposals indeed deserve very careful attention.

J.—I. CALVEZ, S.J.
l'Action Populaire
Paris

SOCIALISM AND SAINT-SIMON. By Emile Durkheim. Edited by Alvin W. Gouldner and translated by Charlotte Sattler. Antioch Press, Yellow Springs, O., xxix, 240 pp. \$5

If it were possible to write a history of sociology based solely on the lives of those who contributed most to its development, then the life and writings of Emile Durkheim would have to be given careful consideration. His *Règles de la Méthode sociologique* (1895), *Division du Travail social* (1895), *Le Suicide* (1897) and *Les Formes élémentaires de la Vie religieuse* (1912) are well known. But less known is his *Le Socialisme* published now for the first time in English under the title *Socialism and Saint-Simon*.

If Saint-Simon or Comte deserves recognition as the founder of sociology, Durkheim was the first to obtain official recognition as a professor of that discipline in France. The contents of the book under review are simply a presentation, with some minor editing and some omissions, of

a series of lectures delivered at Bordeaux from the winter of 1895 to the spring of 1896. They were originally compiled and edited by Marcel Mauss, one of Durkheim's students. Apparently the French sociologist had intended to write a more exhaustive study of socialism but other interests intervened and he never realized his ambition.

Durkheim was probably the first to approach socialism from the sociological point of view by attempting to examine the social pressures responsible for its emergence as an ideology. Socialism was, in his eyes, not so much a "scientific formulation of social facts" but "a social fact of the highest importance." To him socialism was not oriented to the past but to the future. It was not a science but "... a sociology in miniature—a cry of grief, sometimes of anger, uttered by men who feel most keenly our collective *malaise*." Durkheim sees in his subject a conscious effort to link industrial activities to the state and in Marxism, not the disappearance of capitalism, but simply its administration by society and not by the individual. Communism, Durkheim held, assigned a peripheral position to economic functions in social life whereas socialism placed such functions as centrally as possible. "The fundamental axiom of socialism," he writes, "is that there are no social interests outside economic interests, whereas the axiom of communism is that economic interests are anti-social."

Durkheim's study is not primarily important as a contribution to the history of ideas. It is, as Dr. Gouldner observes, "a document of exceptional intellectual interest." Durkheim subjects socialism to a dispassionate analysis, not ignoring its history and at times concentrating on its content with surgical incisiveness. After examining the meaning of socialism as used by others, he ventures a definition, or what he called a formula. One calls socialist "those theories which demand a more or less complete connection of all economic functions or of certain of them, though diffused, with the directing and knowing organs of society." The phrase "directing and knowing organs of society" Durkheim preferred to the word state. In a socialistic society economic functions

would be paramount and the purely political functions that are mainly the *raison d'être* of the state would necessarily disappear as would eventually the state itself.

The socialist movement was a "movement to organize" and through organization rid the world of the evils that have for ages plagued society. Organization is inseparable from socialism. Since organization demands organizers, the question as to who will do the organizing remains. Saint-Simon did not hesitate to answer this question; in fact, it was not only an answer but *the* answer. Since, he stated, the only useful functions in society are industrial functions, those who controlled such functions should alone govern. However, industrial functions are of such paramount importance that there must be surety that they be placed in the hands of the most capable. His was a society of the *élite* who would use their superior knowledge for the welfare of all. They would govern not in the sense that they would compel conformity but rather they would explain what best conformed to the nature of things which, when once understood, would result in the voluntary acceptance by the people of the decisions of the *élite*. The *élite's* actions would not be "right" because of their source but because they were in compliance with the laws of nature. The kind of governing body proposed by Saint-Simon was not novel, since its basic features had been outlined previously by, among others, Bacon and Condorcet. It would be difficult to accept Saint-Simon without subscribing to the idea of human perfectibility. It might be noted that while he refused to recognize Plato as a precursor, Saint-Simon's advocacy of leadership by the informed is suggestive of a Platonic collective philosopher-king.

Durkheim's failure to pursue his projected history of socialism is regrettable. If what he wrote was a promise of what was to come, students of the subject have reason to consider its abandonment as unfortunate. This new and faithful translation of *Le Socialisme* should serve to make its author's views on the theory of socialism better known. They deserve attention.

KIERAN J. CARROLL
Silver Spring, Maryland

JANUARY, 1960

Protestant and Jewish views of American Catholics

The Church in America as it
looks to representative
non-Catholics

ROBERT MCAFFEE BROWN
ARTHUR COHEN MARTIN MARTY
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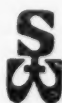
With an Afterword by
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DIARY OF A STRIKE. By Bernard Karsh.
University of Illinois Press, Urbana. 174
pp. \$3.50

The development and processes of a strike in a garment factory in a small town is the theme of this study. The factory, family-owned, resents and resists on the basis of 19th century economic philosophy the organization of its employees. This study is concerned with what might be called "micro-industrial relations" in an anachronistic situation.

The latter half of the book depicts tactics of organizing, worker views on the strike, new relationships resulting from the strike and a follow-up analysis four years after the event. It is well done but the reader feels he has been exposed to all this before and begins to wonder about other aspects. For example, wasn't there a golden opportunity lost to place in perspective an analysis of the employer's views by the use of the same interview guide constructed to elicit information from the employees?

Karsh does not presume to make value judgments. It is disheartening, however, to see revealed an absence of concern for the commonweal on the part of employer, employees and union. Nor is it pleasant to read with what relish certain tactics were used during the strike.

HARRY B. KIES
Rockhurst College
Kansas City, Mo.

LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Edited by Walter Galenson.
Wiley, New York, xii, 303 pp. \$6.75

Under the editorship of Galenson, four experts associated with the Inter-University Study of Labor Problems in Economic Development explore labor and union actualities in five undeveloped countries: India, Egypt, Japan, French West Africa, and British West India.

They have supplied a wealth of material with which to test current views about such labor force characteristics as lateness at work and absenteeism, turnover, the desertion of industry during harvest season, etc. One learns that we have exaggerated notions about how much there is of all these obstacles to effective industrialization. The editor says that "lack of economic

motivation nowhere appears a serious consideration." He adds that "Labor force creation is not as difficult as supposed..."

The chief interest of the studies centers on the role of unionism, establishing the conclusion that trade union activity in the undeveloped countries, despite difference of history and culture, is of a generic type. Most notably, trade unions tend to a political and of radical ideology. The conditions for a business unionism—high average income yielding minimum standards of living, and union strength adequate for effective bargaining—are lacking.

As a consequence, the new unions are drawn irresistibly to seek their gains from radical political action. They push for nationalization and for government controls, hoping thus to increase their share of the national income either through extended social services or through other social legislation designed to lift wages.

The editor concludes that the most one can hope for from this politicization of unions is that the control will be held by "indigenous radicals rather than by the local branches of world communism." He does not believe that it is "in the ultimate interests of economic stability" to "force the legislative suppression of nonconspiratorial radicalism." Besides helping to prevent subversion, these unions presently perform still another function, that of "channeling worker protest into socially useful forms."

PHILIP LAND, S.J.
Gregorian University
Rome

TWENTY YEARS OF PUBLIC HOUSING.
By Robert Moore Fisher. Harper, New
York. 303 pp. \$6.50

Mr. Fisher's book is scholarly. It is competently done. It covers a good deal of historical ground with considerable exactitude. It possesses, however, neither interest nor significance (in terms of impact from conclusions) for most readers. Even students or professional workers in fields directly or indirectly concerned with public housing, Mr. Fisher's avowed target, will find little new or startling in the study.

In discussing the public housing program along three lines, Mr. Fisher finds that the

SOCIAL ORDER

program has made hardly more than a slight beginning in eliminating slum and blighted housing that it is costly to federal and municipal governments (both in monies now being expended or revenues renounced and in future commitments) and that, although untried, the program is probably not an effective weapon against unemployment. Mr. Fisher points out that the emphasis of public housing has shifted from slum clearance to providing standard housing at relatively low rentals to low-income groups. He sees a goodly amount of social research as being necessary to help formulate satisfactory solutions to the social problems of public housing. He suggests further that less rigid housing standards would make the total task of eliminating substandard housing less expensive.

One cannot, of course, quarrel with Mr. Fisher's data or, very much, with his conclusions, as far as they go. One can, however, react strongly to his attitude which seems to say, "My goodness, what a lot of money is being spent here!"

What about the costs involved in land payments to those social parasites, the owners of slum property? Where is the economic right (other than one rejecting morality) in the land cost of eleven-story elevator buildings built on a slum site being more for each apartment than for

one-acre sites in upper class developments in the same metropolitan locality? What about the costs (something like 81 cents of every federal tax dollar) of paying for past and future wars as compared to the cost of a housing program worth the name?

Mr. Fisher deals with certain economic aspects of public housing all right but not, in all likelihood, with those which make much difference.

JOHN G. MAGUIRE
Saint Louis, Mo.

MONEY IN YOUR POCKET. By Price A. Patton and Martha Patton. David McKay Company, Inc., New York, viii, 181 pp. \$3.50

Written for young adults unmarried, planning marriage or married, this book discusses problems created by poor money management and shows how a sound financial program can be started in early years and modified with the increasing responsibilities of high school, college and the first years of marriage. The importance of encouraging young people to make their own decisions about what they want to acquire and to plan how they will pay for it is stressed throughout. A useful book for young people and their counsellors.

LEO C. BROWN, S.J.

Letters

Catholic Social Action in the American environment

If one who was not present at the National Catholic Social Action Conference's annual meeting in St. Louis during August, 1959, may be permitted to comment on the editor's editorial, "How Good Are Our Answers?" *SOCIAL ORDER*, November 1959), I should like to do so.

The criticism that too many Catholic social action people are not really coming to grips with the complex social issues of our day is justified, it seems to me. As was observed: "There is a tendency among earnest people . . . to think that principles,

frequently enough invoked, serve as a substitute for a policy." There is too little acceptance of the facts and insufficient effort made to adopt policy to the demands of a changing society. What is worse, there is a complacency with outmoded policies that seems to stem from mental lethargy and satisfaction with earlier policies that may have been meaningful in the past.

The attitude of Catholic social actionists toward current labor problems is too often that of the non-Catholic labor press. The same clichés are used, expressed in the same terms. Trade union papers may be excused for defending the ante-World War II status of labor, for like all interest

groups they have a stake in the status quo. Catholic social actionists, however, have no such vested interest. They ought to be very much aware of the fact that human dignity is not preserved nor is the common good advanced by insisting that outmoded work laws, such as those governing railroad trainmen, remain on the books. The social actionist ought to know more about what some large corporations, such as Standard Oil of New Jersey, are doing about the human problems raised by technological change and not be content with assuming that the demands of the social encyclicals will always be met by the labor-management arrangements of the 1930s.

There is no doubt that some management leaders would like to see the Congress turn the clock back by passing general labor legislation of a punitive nature, as a result of the McClellan Committee hearings, under the guise of regulations. However, it is a serious error to believe that this is true of business in general as any reading of business journals, or speeches, or conversation with business leaders will demonstrate to open-minded inquirers. The constant accusation that business is selfish and predatory while labor is presented as public spirited and openhanded, is irritating, particularly coming from a Catholic chorus whose knowledge of normal human nature ought to help toward better judgment. Congress cannot turn back the hands of the clock in labor relations but neither can the unions, even with the help of Catholic social actionists, stop their forward movement.

The editor mentioned that little was being done about analyzing and trying to suggest new policies in the areas of inflation and crop surpluses as well as in the field of labor legislation.

Here, too, I should have to agree. It seems to me that the Catholic social action movement has just been querulous about inflation. It blames this on materialism and seems to suggest that less seeking after the goods of this world would help reduce the problem. In a curious way it echoes the Eisenhower administration's exhortations to be thrifty, save, and do without. This is no real policy because it by-passes two very important factors which must be dealt with in any policy formulated to pro-

vide workable answers to inflation. One is the factor of mass production, which demands a mass market and the mass consumption of material things. Any suggestion that this Gordian knot can be cut by simply reducing the number of assembly lines and putting more people into handicrafts overlooks the fact that our rapidly increasing population depends upon this system—unless one is prepared to reduce the living standard to something like India's.

Another factor is the relation of the production of material goods and the mastery of matter in the universe to man's relation to God and his increased ability to practice the virtues of justice and charity because of the vast production of the material means necessary for the well-being of his fellow man. This is a complex problem indeed but it is one in which Catholics ought boldly to provide leadership, for their faith embraces a belief in God using matter as a means of bringing grace to the soul. The answer cannot be found in any return to a simpler, less materialistic society than now exists.

Finally, Catholic social actionists have never really become involved in the problem of agricultural surpluses. Some of them seem to believe that the answer lies in the return to or the expansion of the number of family sized farms but always with crop supports and sometimes family subsidies in mind. This, of course, is no solution at all and is actually a defeatist approach no matter how much it is dressed up in Jeffersonian terms of the virtues of the agricultural life, or of the relation of the liturgy to the seasonal pattern of farm life. The United States is an urban country and its population pressure as well as the technology of modern farming will make it even more highly urbanized in the next quarter century. We need not subsidize our farmers today; the problem of distributing our huge surpluses is not really insoluble. Solutions will be found only by imaginative people with faith in God and love of human persons in their hearts who acquire expert knowledge to match their spiritual gifts. Again, Catholics are potentially able to provide great leadership here.

In closing, may I say that I do not wish to appear to be merely a critic of the Catholic social action movement who can

carp but not suggest anything better. My proposals are in method only, nor do I wish to de-emphasize or belittle all the good this great movement has accomplished by suggesting some change. For one thing, Catholic social action needs to re-evaluate its activities with a fresh and open-minded approach, to be sure that it isn't getting stagnant and complacent in some areas, content with repetition rather than new approaches. Secondly, social action groups and individuals need in many cases to acquire greater knowledge of the facts. They need to have detailed and accurate information about all aspects of important problems and they must never be guilty of drawing general conclusions from insufficient information or, what is worse, bolstering accepted conclusions by shaky and incomplete data.

Finally, the Catholic social actionist needs to rethink constantly the application of his principles in a constantly changing society. One of its greatest helps to this rethinking is friendly and serious discussion with persons holding different points of view or possessing knowledge not known to the actionist. The Catholic labor action worker needs to learn more about management, automation, and the economics of abundance by conversing with people in these areas and reading their materials. The Catholic social actionist in every area needs to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge in his area as well as enrich and deepen his spiritual life. Catholic social actionists can usually profit by discussions with their non-Catholic friends who are equally concerned about social justice. This type of dialogue is a great corrective for the bad habit of thinking the understanding of principles automatically provides policies for specific problems.

The National Catholic Social Action Conference can do these things, for its members are, in the words of St. Paul, "not of the letter, but of the spirit." Furthermore, they know, as Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., has written: "Society is a rational process, and its rationality consists essentially in its progress—never rectilinear, always interrupted by regressions—towards an ideal of human community, structured after the demands of social justice and the equality of man with

man, and informed by the spirit of social charity and the solidarity of all men."

JAMES R. BROWN

St. Joseph College
West Hartford 7, Conn.

I readily agree with the editor that social thinking is rather poor among Catholics today and that the Church has not yet "absorbed" modern industrial life as in other times it "absorbed" rural life or the rising guild life of medieval artisans. Both in Europe and in America, we have talked much about the *réforme des structures* without giving a thorough definition (or even an approximate one) of possible changes. Still, I would not share the editor's pessimism entirely. Some efforts have been made in the past 50 years which have contributed to obvious progress, for instance, in industrial relations. Perhaps in the United States, Catholics have not contributed very much because they were in a minority position. In Europe, the Catholic contribution can certainly not be termed negligible. I think, therefore, that we have to carry on and continue rather than start from scratch. To this end, an neat, over-all blueprint of a complete set of new institutions is not as useful as daily correcting and modifying existing ones. I am convinced that this is the editor's mind, too, so that the most helpful aspect in the article—and to this I subscribe entirely—was the invitation to concrete, realistic thinking.

On the other hand, a distinction should certainly be made between such practical conclusions—which cannot be the work of the Church's *magisterium* and can hardly hope for unanimous acceptance, at least at first—and a body of Catholic doctrinal thinking on general social lines. This latter has certainly been provided to the faithful in the last 50 years to a much greater extent than in the 19th century.

Finally, I do not share entirely the editor's definition of the economy as an arrangement of material goods. I rather like to think of an economic society and, therefore, of the arrangement of relationships between men with a view to their

personal and social development through exchanges of material goods. In other words, I would make a distinction between the economy and production. And I am sure that the expression the editor gave to his thought on this point goes far beyond his own conviction.

My general feeling is that we have to instill realism into the minds of people too often satisfied with phrases. This does not oblige us to discard the basic aspirations to greater justice which underlie those phrases, especially when they are voiced by people whose technical education is too weak to enable them to undertake practical analyses of contemporary economic problems. This, of course, is how we risk being misunderstood, as I think the editor was recently by his correspondents.

JEAN-IVES CALVEZ, S.J.

Paris, France

As one of the lost sheep that did not make it to St. Louis to the Social Action Conference of 1959, I have had to content myself with cross-examining those who attended and hungrily reading the editor's article in the September 1959 *SOCIAL ORDER*. All of those who attended have been encouraged. The currents are moving. The hangover from the legacy of the 1930's is beginning to be dispelled. The attendance was better and more diversified than ever. The conference session on urban renewal was an unqualified success.

The concerns discussed at the conference seems to represent a new departure. My only worry is whether the departure is really new enough, broad enough or distinctive enough to comprehend the needs of our decade—the 1960's. At this point those who went to St. Louis can roll their eyes and mumble about Monday morning quarterbacks. Those who fought the battles of the 1930's can grit their teeth. (Caution: I was hungry too, then.) Those with an academic mentality can grouse about "the temptation to the grandiose."

I am quite willing to accept jibes and brickbats, if I can have the opportunity to set forth some considerations about the

need for a scheme of social action that would be "social justice in action", unblunted by self-imposed limitations of vision.

The Catholic social action apostolate still speaks in a limited parlance, despite recent improvement. We talk and work for economic harmony, family integrity, interracial justice and the needs of the poor, and this is good and a blessing and proper to our Christian role. What seems to have escaped us is that our concern for such issues is a concern for segments only. Of course, problems must be scaled down to size for analysis and action. That is beyond argument. But, the problems must be kept as part of a larger perspective if we are to work at them realistically and according to proper priorities and emphasis.

The defect seems to be that Catholic analysis, even the best of it, has been unable to keep up with the expansion of the social context in which particular problems are set, if indeed such a static term as "set" can be used. What has happened is that social life has proliferated, gyrated, spun out and flowered in countless directions, while at the same time concentrating, complicating and intensifying in selected forms and institutions. Life has a new immensity, a radical flexibility, and a vast stream of communication and new social activity. Postwar America is huge with expansion, and so is postwar Brazil, Japan, Germany and North Africa.

The Catholic social action movement seems only dimly aware of the dimensions of this development, perhaps because it is too careful, too cautious about the truth to expand its view dramatically—as dramatically as the changing social picture. In former times revolutions were rare and limited. Today, all men share in revolution: economic, religious and social.

It is extremely necessary for us to comprehend the general scope and size and pace of social life even if we are working only on a minute section of its problems. Only by appreciating the total environment can we understand the life of man in its parts. A grasp of the significance of the general social situation is also necessary if the social actionist is to have an adequate vision for his social reconstruction, a view of life inspiring enough to challenge him in the development of plans that are truly

social in their conception and impact, and not just the plots of dreamers.

In the interests of trying to promote breadth of conception that would expand beyond the restricted scale of social problems that have preoccupied Catholic social action for the past few decades, I have listed the following as a new set of categories for exploration. Not all the exploration would be new, by any means, but the categories would be more realistic as a framework for our concerns than the familiar social action themes we have employed.

Peace. This is the critical issue of the atomic age, one on which Catholic social action in America has been all but mute. The keenly concentrated military institutions of technical warfare stand ready to unleash planet-shuddering destruction momentarily. The restraints they suffer are not Christian, only pragmatic. And yet, the initiative (what there is of it) in begging for the control of the forces of technical war, is held by Red peace brigades with phony motives, Quakers and ineffective radicals. The Catholic social actionists continue blithely along as if radiation weren't being distributed on every breeze.

Use of Resources. This would seem to be the appropriate category for our concerns about farm surpluses, urban renewal, consumer problems and unemployment. Man has a new mastery over resources. He cannot control one part unless he recognizes its relation to the other.

Control of Technology. Related to the former, but more concretely a problem of educational and professional discipline rather than one of social policy, this issue is most urgently faced in the United States, where technology is most prevalent. This is one of our top national problems and, despite the strong references in Papal documents, Catholics seem inured to thorough discussion of it.

Community and Institutional Reorganization. To the whole field of the reconstruction of institutions conceived in the economic and political sense, has been added the sphere of work in planning new towns, new professions and communications milieu. Effective Catholic concern in city planning, administration and social

planning is almost non-existent, perhaps (rightly enough) because we are too busy holding together the foundation to see the eager beavers building additions onto the roof.

Civic and Social Leadership. In our bidding for affection and the confidence of the American public, I believe that Catholic social action has been intimidated by the "live and let live" philosophy. We have made an easy pact with the agnostics and the polite secularists. There are warriors among us, but they are polite today. Before we can dicker over a consensus with our non-Catholic compatriots, we have to have positions on issues that they recognize as different from theirs. To date I don't think we have convinced them that we want more than an amelioration of social evils in a stand-off secular society.

We will never have social leadership unless we are intent on getting it. This means that we must contest for social leadership positions in one area after another. We can't be content with collaborating with lowest common denominator programs. We must seek out leadership roles.

Communication and Cooperation. If we press harder for leadership in social affairs, this will generate tension. To insure that the necessary civic and religious harmony required by the common good prevails, we must considerably enlarge our communication and cooperation with non-Catholics on appropriate issues whenever prudent and possible. This is not inconsistent with a contest for intelligent leadership; it is merely difficult. Interreligious dialogue cannot be confined to the exchanges of theologians. Perhaps a joint social action meeting with Protestant groups could be in the foreseeable future.

DENNIS CLARK

Philadelphia, Pa.

There are points in the editor's article "Social Action in the American Environment" which I found inspiring. One is the recognition of the tension between the Heavenly and Temporal Cities. To many this might seem a trite theme, one that has to be given a bow, but it is just these

most fundamental points that are most neglected because we do not know quite how to put our thought and lazily drift into the old clichés. It seems to me that one of the evils of our intellectual age, which later generations will clearly discern but to which we are largely blind, is over-refinement at the expense of clear thought and judgment on fundamentals.

Another fundamental issue that the editor faced squarely and which I think is what really got a rise out of John Cort is the question of the methodology of Catholic social thought in America. What the editor is saying, I think, is that the American Experiment is unique and is so far ahead of all the others that we should look at it to see what it is and how it operates. The editor implies that too often one sets up shop as a Christian social reformer with good intentions, zeal, and some pre-packaged solutions, which are imposed on the reality, without much concern for what the reality is really like.

The plea for good technical knowledge is correct. I think one of the troubles with Catholic intellectual life in America is that we do not have technically competent people in large enough numbers. I think, too, many go to hide in the good Catholic atmosphere of a Catholic institution. This is a great temptation; it is lonely in our secular institutions.

If we accept American economic achievement and endorse this form of economic life, there remains for me an uneasiness over whether this dissolves Catholicism. Change corrodes tradition, and some of it deserves this fate. Still, I feel uneasy about some traditions that I see going. At other times I think the opportunity is always there to hold fast personally. I need not be overwhelmed by what television does to one, if I have enough personal gumption. The question is: do good institutions make good men or good men make good institutions? Aren't both true proportionally? Shouldn't we strive for both goals proportionally to opportunity?

I did not gather that the editor was trying to say that the American way of life was so good for Catholicism that we could trust that we would remain good men under it, although I am sure he finds little satisfaction in the Catholic Worker

idea of Catholics going back to the land where they can integrate the liturgy and their labors.

WILLIAM F. KENNEDY
Cambridge, England

I am glad to hear the editor say that analysis, thought, and works need to be added to principles in order to achieve social action. I agree that the aim should be a policy rather than a "goal." I feel that "works" need to be stressed as much as "good" if one really wishes to achieve "good works."

GLORIA A. ALLEN
Media, Pa.

I am rather surprised to read in the November 1959 issue of *SOCIAL ORDER* that the editor's recent remarks, including the reference to "In the face of the tolerable order of justice achieved in our society . . .," have stirred up a tempest in what seems to be a rather large teapot.

"Tolerable" means to be able to bear something, to just squeeze in. This does not mean, as John Cort charges, that the editor is having a "love affair" with American capitalism; he is merely stating a fact. After my trips through Spain, Italy, and even France, one finds a capitalist-socialist order which certainly is *not* tolerable for the men at the bottom. It is one of the reasons that these people turn to Communism whereas the American worker, while no raving capitalist, finds no solution on the side of the communist. And if our order is not tolerable, what is the alternative? Socialism? Even over here in Europe, where socialist parties and socialist governments have had their day, the fact is that socialism is today both on the decline and in retreat. The fact is you can't talk any more of "capitalism" or "socialism", they are words of a day that is gone. I think those who attack the editor are somewhat behind the times. They should also consult their dictionaries.

RICHARD L.—G. DEVERALL
Brussels, Belgium

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